POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
Al-Fajr
2025 I Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.
20006

AL FAJR
JERUSAL
PALESTINIAN WEEKLY
(USPS 606-630

APRIL 19, 1985
VOL.VI,NO.259

16 PAGES
IS 450

exp. 85/04
Serial Records Division
Harvard College Library
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

D

Local Palestinians Redirect Murphy to PLO

US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy, President Ronald Reagan's Middle East envoy, met 40 Palestinian figures from the West Bank and Gaza at a cocktail party at the US Consulate in West Jerusalem April 16. The aim of the meeting was described by several of the Palestinian figures as an exchange of views about peace prospects in the Middle East. It was the first public meeting of a diplomat of Murphy's rank with local Palestinians.

According to some news reports, Murphy brought with him from Jordan the names of Palestinian nominees for the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation for talks with the US administration to be approved by Israel. They included: three Palestinians living in the United States — Walid al-Khalidi, Hisham Sharabi, and Edward Said; three from the West Bank and Gaza — Rashad Shawwa, Elias Freij, and Hikmat al-Masri; and Nabil Sha'ath, an advisor to Arafat who resides in Egypt. The reports were not confirmed by Jordan, the PLO, or US officials.

The Palestinian group emphasised during the meeting with Murphy that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians and handed the US envoy a signed petition stating:

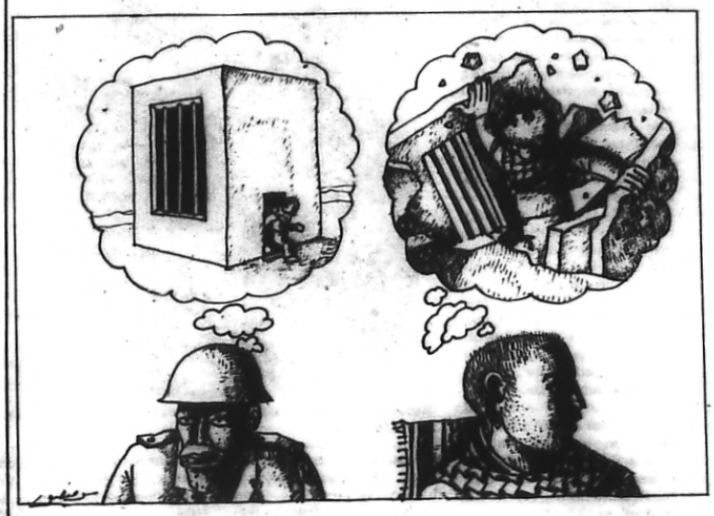
"American administrations have in the past sent official and non-official delegates to the Middle East on fact-finding missions, as well as on missions aimed at giving momentum to the peace process, or at appraising peace prospects.

"These administrations were in the habit of asking their government's representatives in the Middle East, and in particular in occupied Arab territories, to arrange meetings for these delegates with Palestinian personalities from Jerusalem, the rest of the West Bank, and Gaza, in order to hear their points of view, inasmuch as these points of view were considered representative of Palestinian public opinion in the occupied Arab territories.

"In most cases, we met with these American delegates and explained our people's point of view. We also requested that

continued on page 4

Memorandum presented to Richard Murphy



Palestinians all over the world remember, with respect, their brothers and sisters imprisoned in Israeli jails.

Orthodox Jew Douses "Holy Fire" Procession

Four Assyrian youths were injured April 13 in an attack on an Easter procession by an Orthodox Jewish family living near the Assyrian Convent.

On the occasion of Holy Fire, April 13, members of the Assyrian community led by the archbishop were processing to their church in the Christian quarter of the Old City. Members of a Jewish family living in a nearby apartment bombarded the procession with hot water and rocks from an apartment window. In an attempt to thwart the attackers, several Assyrian youths stormed the building looking for the family's apartment. According to some of the injured youths, Jewish residents of the building confronted them with submachine guns poised to fire. A policeman walking with the procession fired several shots in the air in an attempt to prevent possible shooting of the Assyrian youths.

The archbishop of the Assyrian Church — the oldest Christian community in the Holy Land — warned the Israeli government and Jerusalem municipality April 15 to take immediate action against the fundamentalist Jewish tenants or he and members of his congregation would remove them by force, if necessary. Archbishop Dionisious Behnan Jijawi said Jewish tenants of the same building were involved in four pfevious attacks on the Assyrian community, all four occurring during Christian holidays. The archbishop said he complained to the police about the previous attacks but no action was taken.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the attackers are newly converted Orthodox Jews of American origin. Police, who refuse to identify the attackers or even to state if the attack was perpetrated by a lone individual or group, told Archbishop Jijawi that the tenant is "crazy." Jijawi was not satisfied with that explanation and resolved to take action. "If he (or the family) is crazy, then he should be moved to an asylum," he told *Al Fajr*.

The police summoned to the scene demanded the names of the Assyrian youths who broke in and ransacked the fortified Jewish residence, said the archbishop, instead of attempting to punish the tenants for the attack. The archbishop refused to give names, however, and asserted that the youths had acted in self defense.

Youths from the Assyrian community told *Al Fajr* that Jewish fanatics who live in the nearby Jewish quarter have tried to provoke them regularly. They

continued on page 13

IN THIS ISSUE

Civil War in Beirut p.2
Palestinians Remember Prisoners p.3
Haifa University Students Sentenced p.4
Arab Americans Launch New Institute p.5
Enlightenment Behind Bars p.6
Women's Centre Principal Wins Case Against UNRWA p.7
Super-exploitation in the Sewing Industry . . . . . pp.8&9
Writers Forum Hails Literature by Political Prisoners p.11
Prison Fertile Ground for Disease p.16

Karameh Resigns over Militia Fighting in Beirut

Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karameh resigned April 17 as fighting intensified in Beirut during the week when Shi'ite Amal and Druze PSP militias fought off a bid by the Murabitoun militia to establish a new base in the Hamra area. Murabitoun headquarters in Mazra'a and its radio station were attacked. At least 29 people are known to have been killed in the fighting in heavily populated residential areas. The fighting also involved Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp and Sabra and Shatila camps, areas controlled by Amal.

Karameh, a Sunni Muslim, resigned his post from the one-year-old Lebanese national unity government in protest against the fighting in Beirut, which he described as a "horrific nightmare." He described Amal's crackdown on the Murabitoun, the militia of the Beirut Sunnis, as a "colossally dangerous" event.

In the southern port city of Sidon, fighting between rebel Phalangist militias under Samir Ja'ja', on the one hand, and Amal and Palestinian fighters, on the other, continued for the sixth straight week. The fighting concentrated mainly around the Palestinian refugee camps of Ain al-Hilweh and Mia Mia.

Lebanese press reports from the Sidon area said the total number of casualties has reached 75 dead and 379 wounded. A Lebanese army unit was dispatched to Sidon a week after the fighting started with a mission to stop the hostilities but has so far not seen action. The PLO accused certain Arab and non-Arab parties of delaying attempts to call for a special meeting of the Security Council to discuss the fate of the Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon. In a statement released by the Palestine Press Agency WAFA, the PLO charged certain unnamed parties with giving an opportunity to "hostile forces to destroy our people in Lebanon under the pretext of the return of Palestinian fighters to south Lebanon."

The PLO, which only has an observer status at the UN and therefore cannot call for a special meeting, has been urging the international organisation to intervene to stop the rightist shelling of unarmed Palestinian refugees in the Sidon area.

House-to-house and room-to-room characterised the fighting in Beirut this week.

UNRWA Casualty Report

A press release by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

continued on page 13

BEQA'A AIR RAID

Resistance Forces Engage Israeli Occupation Troops in South

Israeli warplanes bombed a Palestinian base April 17 in Syrian-controlled areas in eastern Lebanon. An Israeli army spokesperson said a one-storey building used by Palestinian fighters from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine was the target of the attack. No reports of casualties have been given.

In southern Lebanon, resistance to the Israeli occupation forces continued. Seven Israeli soldiers were wounded April 17 in two separate guerrilla attacks, in the western and eastern sectors of south Lebanon. A roadside bomb exploded near the village of Kanna, in the western sector, wounding three soldiers. The other four were injured when their armoured personnel carrier ran over a land mine.

The guerrillas continued their ambush attacks on Israeli bases throughout the week as the Israeli army got ready to complete its retreat from most of occupied south Lebanon. Last week the army pulled out of Nabatiyeh in south Lebanon, which had been the scene of several anti-Israel attacks. A Lebanese army unit moved into the city soon afterwards to take control. Israel is expected to complete its withdrawal from south Lebanon by early this summer.

200 West Bankers Call for PLO Unity

More than 200 representatives of national institutions and professionals in the occupied territories signed a statement April 13 calling for "unity in the PLO on the basis of national opposition to Zionism, imperialism, and reactionary Arabs." The statement, issued in the form of a one-time publication entitled *The Voice of the Occupied Territories*, follows a similar memorandum issued by 34 members of the Palestine National Council (PNC) residing in Jordan. Signatories in effect condemned US, Jordanian, and Egyptian political moves which they believe are aimed at bypassing the PLO.

The statement also criticised the February 11 agreement between PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein, which they feel puts the national cause in jeopardy. The statement said that "the agreement would lead to deepening the rift within PLO ranks, and pave the way for further imperialist intervention in the area." Signatories reaffirmed "adherence to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and reiterated their rejection of UN Resolution 242, which does not recognise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to return." They called for "escalating the popular and political struggle as a primary method for the restoration of Palestinian national rights."

Among the 200 figures who signed the statement were the elected Mayors of Nablus, Bassam Shaka'a, al-Bireh, Ibrahim Tawil, and Anabta, Wahid al-Hamdallah, and a number of municipal council members. The statement was also signed by many West Bank unionists, journalists, student blocs, and women's unions.

Jordan Lifts Travel Restrictions

The Jordanian government lifted April 13 the travel restrictions that had barred West Bank and Gaza residents from travelling to Jordan. The restrictions were imposed on April 30, 1983 after talks between the PLO and the Jordanian government failed to produce a coordinated stand for future political moves concerning the Palestinian problem.

Under these restrictions which were implemented on the stated pretext that the Jordanian government "wanted to reduce the level of emigration out of the occupied territories," West Bank residents were not allowed to stay in Jordan for more than one month. Visitors also had to fill out a questionnaire about the purpose and length of their visits. The travel restriction came in the form of regulations which permitted West Bank youths aged 18 to 26 to stay in Jordan for one month only. If they stayed longer than one month, they would be subject to drafting in the Jordanian army, which would effectively bar them from returning to the West Bank forever. Israeli regulations, on the other hand, require youths aged 18 to 26 to remain abroad for at least six months. Consequently, Jordanian officials were refusing to allow visitors carrying the regular six-month Israeli travel permit to enter the country.

According to the local *Al Quds* Arabic daily, the new regulations apply to both the King Hussein (Allenby) bridge and the Prince Mohammed (Damyah) bridge, and permit all West Bank and Gaza residents, regardless of age, free access to Jordan. The regulations also stipulate that West Bank Palestinians can now stay and work in Jordan, or continue on to any other Arab country to work.

Al Quds daily reported that the Jordanian government also plans to release passports which were confiscated from Palestinians residing in Jordan or the West Bank for political reasons. Thousands of passports have been confiscated by the Jordanian secret service since the Black September massacres of 1970.

By contrast, the Jordanians arrested Saji Salameh, member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) central committee. Salameh, a Palestinian residing in Jordan, has been arrested several times in the past for his political activities. *Al Fajr* Arabic daily reported that PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat intervened personally each time in the past to get Salameh released.

Palestinian Reaction

Though it was welcomed by many local Palestinians, the restriction lifting was viewed by some as a political step aimed at improving relations with residents of the occupied territories, hence undermining the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people.

The decision to lift the restrictions was welcomed by many students and employees who had not been able to pursue their studies or return to work outside due to the Jordanian measures. An employee at Abdo Taxi Service in Jerusalem, which operates between Jerusalem and the Allenby bridge, told *Al Fajr* that the number of people wishing to travel to Jordan had risen sharply after the decision was made public.

The move was also welcomed by members of the Jordanian Parliament who reside in the West Bank. MP Edward Khamis said that they had been demanding the removal of the travel limitations for a long time. "These restrictions were against the policy of the parliament," he said. He added that during several meetings with the government they had argued that the restriction did not curb emigration, and that it was exacerbating rising unemployment among Palestinian university graduates.

Bashir al-Barghouthi, editor of *Al Tali'a* weekly, described the lifting of the travel ban as an attempt by the Jordanian regime to expand its political base in the occupied territories. He said the Jordanians are trying to woo the Palestinian people and that this cancellation of the restrictions is another measure along that line. As further proof of this Jordanian intention, he said, more than half of the new Jordanian ministries are led by Palestinians. Barghouthi said he considers that these moves are aimed at paving the way for a political initiative based on the Amman agreement concluded with PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat last February 11. He rejected the idea that the restrictions were originally motivated by the desire to curb emigration and boost steadfastness.

The elected mayor of Nablus, Bassam Shaka'a, also expressed surprise at the decision. "Perhaps they changed their minds about fighting emigration from the occupied territories," he remarked. Shaka'a pointed out that the idea of maintaining steadfastness was mutilated by the travel restriction, which produced only negative results. He explained that in order to reap positive results, such a plan must be coordinated with a complete programme to boost steadfastness and solve existing problems, and to cope with new difficulties that might be caused by such measures, like unemployment among university graduates.

Thafer Masri, head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, welcomed the Jordanian decision. In a statement published in *Al Quds* daily, Masri said the cancellation of the restrictions will allow Palestinians in the occupied territories some breathing room.

Relatives and friends of Palestinian prisoners participate in Prisoners' Day commemoration at Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in Jerusalem held on April 16/AO photo

Stones, Tyres, Rallies Mark Prisoner's Day

Prisoner's Day was widely observed in the occupied territories April 17 with a central rally in Jerusalem and regional meetings throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Incidents of stone-throwing at Israeli vehicles and buses were reported throughout the West Bank April 17.

The Women's Committee for Social Action held a central rally at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in Jerusalem April 16 which was attended by over 300 relatives and friends of political prisoners. In addition to statements, national songs, and dances, mothers and wives of Palestinian prisoners were honoured with symbolic gifts. In other West Bank and Gaza cities the families of prisoners were visited and given gifts of flowers and sweets.

On the roads, Israel Radio reported that Israeli vehicles passing by the Shu'fat refugee camp in Jerusalem were stoned and Palestinian youths burned tyres on a number of secondary roads. Several residents were arrested. In the Wadi Joz area of Jerusalem, an Egged bus was stoned as it passed near the Palestine Museum (now called Rockefeller) intersection. Stone-throwing incidents against Israeli vehicles were also reported at the intersection of the Jerusalem suburb of Dahiat al-Barid and the main Jerusalem-Ramallah road.

Youths also threw stones at passing Israeli vehicles near the Kalandia refugee camp. Israeli soldiers posted outside the camp chased the youths and fired tear gas at them. In Nablus an Israeli bus was stoned and its windshield broken as it passed near the centre of the city. Israeli soldiers surrounded the area and broke into a number of homes. Other stoning incidents were reported in al-Bireh and al-Am'ari camps north of Jerusalem. (Translation: Al Quds, Al Fajr, April 18, 1985).

New WB 'Weapon' Worries Israelis

Israel Radio reported April 11 that a metal ball was used the previous day in an attack on an Israeli bus in the Nablus district. A slingshot was used to throw the ball.

The radio said the attack, the first of its kind in the occupied territories, injured one passenger and smashed two bus windows. It said Israeli border troops closed off the area and conducted a search for the attackers. No arrests were made.

West Bank youths have in the past thrown stones in their attacks at Israeli vehicles. Israeli officials are worried now that the new method of using slingshots to propel steel balls may cause more damage. The balls can be slung from a distance allowing time for the attacker to escape.

Jerusalem Muslims Mark *Isra wal Miraj* Holiday

Scout groups from Jerusalem and the surrounding areas marched through the streets of East Jerusalem April 18 celebrating the feast of *Isra' wa Mi'raj*. The Islamic holiday is an important Islamic event and has special importance in Jerusalem. According to Islamic tradition, Prophet Mohammed stopped in Jerusalem on his ascent to heaven early in the morning of the 27th of the month of *Rajab*.

Muslims celebrate this occasion by praying at al-Aqsa Mosque the night before the anniversary. Sweetshops stay open late into the night and serve special once-a-year treats.

DFPE Delegation Condemns Fara'a Conditions

Knesset members Meir Wilner and Tawfiq Zayyad of Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) appealed to people of conscience in Israel and the world to protest harsh conditions, including torture, in the Fara'a detention centre. They called for the closure of the military prison located 20 kilometres northeast of Nablus.

Wilner and Zayyad spoke at a press conference convened at the Government Press Office Beit Agron April 17. The two, along with Tawfiq Toubi of the DFPE, visited Fara'a prison April 10 and met with prison officials and prisoners in an investigation of reports of torture. Several legal and civil rights groups have filed complaints in the past against the prison's military authorities.

The three Knesset members listened to prison officials' claims that "the interrogation is in general a conversation and beating is forbidden." They then toured the jail for four hours, speaking with prisoners held in tents in the prison yard and in interrogation cells.

Wilner, Toubi, and Zayyad were told by Fara'a officials that approximately 7500 prisoners have been arrested and taken to the detention centre during the past three years. Two hundred to 250 youngsters aged 14 to 24 are currently being held in prison. The average age of prisoners is 17, they said.

In their presentation before Israeli, Palestinian, and foreign journalists, Wilner and Zayyad said they were told by prisoners of "shocking facts" regarding physical and psychological torture to which prisoners in Fara'a are subjected. Wilner asserted that the prisoners' accounts are true because their stories were nearly identical except for a few minor details. Their stories, told in front of prison officials, contradicted the military claim that more than 70 percent of prisoners are arrested only after incriminating evidence was found against them. Prisoners told the Knesset members they were merely rounded up and tortured until they confessed to charges they were often innocent of.

Zayyad said that there is a systematic practice of torture at Fara'a. "In this system of interrogation," Zayyad said, "the prisoner is brought to jail and tortured for four to five days. All kinds of physical abuse is used to extract confessions from prisoners who are usually arrested on charges of illegally demonstrating or participating in stone-throwing incidents." Zayyad also said that some prisoners were interrogated about their political beliefs.

Israeli journalists asked why the prisoners did not file official complaints about their treatment. Wilner answered them that the prisoners fear the interrogators will then take revenge. He cited a case in which a prisoner who complained to authorities was severely beaten and his jaw broken.

Zayyad, a well-known advocate of Palestinian rights, added that "prisoners have confidence in us. They contact us after their release and report what happened to them." Asked about the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Wilner said the Red Cross usually files complaints and writes reports, but does not publish them. Zayyad then again asserted that prisoners are arrested for political reasons. He said there were three prisoners arrested on March 27, three days before Land Day celebrations, and interrogated about their political opinions.

The detainees at Fara'a detention centre are held under harsh conditions including: severe overcrowding; low quality of food; unavailability of books, newspapers, radio and television; long periods of detention without trial; poor sanitary conditions; and the lack of a canteen.

Fara'a detention centre was established in April 1982 after an initiative by Rafael Eitan, former chief of staff, to crush the Palestinian resistance to the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza.

12 Dheisheh Residents Remanded Till Trial

Israeli authorities also issued charge sheets against 12 other Dheisheh residents, including journalist Hamdi Farraj, nearly two weeks ago, remanding them until their trial. The 12 are being held at the newly opened Tulkarm detention centre. Like Fara'a, the detention centre is under the direct control of the Israeli army rather than the Israeli prisons authority. Their trial is scheduled to take place at the Israeli military court in Ramallah at the beginning of May.

Two identical charge sheets were issued for the 12 detainees based on allegations by members of the Israeli-backed Village League, following the clashes between camp residents and Village Leaguers last January. According to lawyers, the charges included damaging property, setting a car on fire, throwing Molotov cocktails, and inciting youths. These action were instigated by the PLO, the charge sheets asserted. The 12 were among 26 Dheisheh youths rounded up in an arrest campaign on February 1. The other 14 detainees were released after varying periods of detention in Fara'a and Tulkarm detention centres and the Bethlehem lockup.

Hamdi Farraj, a prominent West Bank journalist, was serving a town arrest order when he was arrested. Amnesty International had asked for his release from town arrest.

Ramallah Municipality Spurns Reinstallment Offer

Members of the elected Ramallah municipal council rejected April 15 a proposal by Israeli military authorities to return to their municipal posts. The municipal council declared an open strike in April 1982 after the military sacked the late Mayor Karim Khalaf for refusing to meet and recognise the Israeli civil administration.

Reverend Odeh Rantisi, deputy mayor of Ramallah, told *Al Fajr* that members of the municipal council were summoned one at a time to the Israeli military headquarters in Ramallah on April 15 and 16 for what they called a brief chat. Reverend Rantisi said he was infuriated when the Israeli head of the civil administration and his deputy suggested the municipal council return to their task of supervising city affairs under the present Israeli mayor for a few months. He told *Al Fajr* he was particularly disgusted because he considered it a measure timed to take advantage of the death of the elected mayor, Karim Khalaf, who died of a heart attack two weeks ago. He said he told Israeli officials that it was impossible for them to return to the municipality under current conditions.

Referring to the Israeli civil administration, Reverend Rantisi said that conditions have not changed to allow the council's return to the municipality. He said they refuse to even consider returning without the return of the other municipal councils also sacked in 1982. A total of eight mayors and municipal councils from the West Bank and one in Gaza were sacked between March and July 1982 for refusing to meet with the Israeli civil administration head.

Reverend Rantisi said that in the past the Israelis have tried in vain to get a number of council members to take over for Karim Khalaf. Presently the municipality is run by an Israeli-appointed Jewish mayor.

5 Haifa U. Students Sentenced, Fined

Haifa magistrates court sentenced five Haifa University students April 15 to three months suspended for two years and stiff fines for their role in a series of student demonstratoins two months ago. After a plea bargain arrangement with the prosecution, they were convicted of holding an illegal assembly on campus. The five are: Amir Makhoul, president of the Arab Students Committee; Rizq Sahouri; Kamal Ahmad Hussein; Karim Zbeidat; and Ja'afar Farah. Sahouri was fined IS125,000, Makhoul IS100,000, and the other three IS50,000 each.

Makhoul and Sahouri also received actual prison sentences for destroying university property retroactive to the date of their arrest, March 10. They were released from prison following the court hearing.

The five Haifa University students — along with seven others who were only barred from participating in student activities — were arrested March 10 following a protest sit-in at the university against the administration's decision to suspend Makhoul and Farah from studies. The two were suspended for disrupting a lecture by former chief of staff Rafael Eitan. Makhoul was suspended for one academic year and Farah for one semester.

Makhoul told *Al Fajr* the police raid on a peaceful sit-in held by Arab students March 10 was "an attempt to take revenge" on the Arab students. The police, called by the university administration, used tear gas and clubs to break up the sit-in. Makhoul added that Arab students are demanding an investigative committee be appointed to examine police intervention on campus and reconsider his suspension and that of Farah.

The court sentences coincided with a general strike April 15 by all Arab students in Israeli universities as a show of protest against the detentions and suspension of the Haifa University students. The strike was called by the Regional Union of Arab Students Committees. According to the Communist Party daily, *Al Ittihad*, Arab students boycotted classes April 15 and instead attended a general protest meeting for Arab students and their supporters at Haifa University. Student representatives from Hebrew University and the Technion joined the meeting.

Speakers at the meeting called for continuing struggle against discriminatory policies against Arab students at Israeli universities, for the return of Arab students suspended from the various universities or forced to leave their dormitories at the Technion, and for the formation of an academic committee of inquiry to investigate police actions at Haifa University on March 10.

Palestinian Artist Harassed at Bridge

Prominent Palestinian artist Suleiman Mansour was harassed and prevented from leaving the West Bank April 16 by way of the King Hussein (Allenby) bridge.

Mansour, 38, is from Ramallah and vice president of the Palestinian Artists' League in the occupied territories. He was leaving to participate in symposia and university lectures on Palestinian art in Holland, Norway, and Sweden.

Upon arriving at the Israeli crossing point, Mansour was ushered into a special room for a search of his baggage. Israeli authorities found single copies of a number of his own posters, which they claimed were "hostile to the state of Israel." After discussion among Israeli officials, Mansour was then taken to the local police station and fingerprinted. Police opened a file in his name and are reportedly studying the case to decide whether to charge him or not. Mansour was later released and returned home.

Last November, Mansour had tried to travel to Sweden to give similar lectures but again was turned back. At the time, the Israeli authorities had told the Swedish consul in Jerusalem that Mansour would be allowed to travel soon after the end of the Palestine National Council session in Amman, held November 22-29.

Commenting on the Israeli action, Mansour said bridge authorities rarely search exiting travelers. He believed that the "special treatment" he received was due, however, to his art work.

Mansour, who is also a contributing cartoonist for *Al Fajr* English weekly, has been arrested for questioning on numerous occasions about his art work and then released. Mansour participated in the controversial joint Palestinian-Israeli art exhibit entitled "Against Occupation and for Freedom of Expression" now on display at Keren Shalom kibbutz near the southern Israeli border.

Israeli Soldier Gets Life Sentence

David Ben Shimol, the Israeli soldier who fired a rocket at an Arab bus, was sentenced in the Jerusalem Regional Court April 17 to life term in prison. Ben Shimol was found guilty of firing a LAW rocket at an Arab bus in Jerusalem seven months ago; one man died as a result of the attack and ten were wounded. He was also convicted of throwing a bag full of explosives at an Old City cafe and injuring four people.

Before being sentenced, Ben Shimol requested permission to make a statement to the court. The judges decided to let the 20-year-old soldier speak, but asked him to confine himself to his conditions of imprisonment.

But Ben Shimol made a political statement: "I acted under the same influence as the members of the Jewish underground... I am no different from them..."

At that point, Judge Brenner cut Ben Shimol short, telling him the courtroom was not the place for such statements. When he was taken out of the courtroom, Ben Shimol was cheered by his relatives and friends.

"I believe in what I did," Ben Shimol told journalists and photographers that surrounded him outside the courtroom. "I acted in keeping with my ideology... I did what had to be done. I should be imprisoned together with the members of the Jewish underground because I am just like them and there is no difference between us. I do not belong with the common criminals."

Ben Shimol also said that he plans to appeal his sentence. (Translation: Al Hamishmar, April 18, 1985)

Redirecting Murphy

continued from page 1

this point of view be conveyed to the American administration in Washington, whether at the White House or in the State Department, or at whichever other official destination.

"In spite of these numerous meetings, we have not until now sensed any change in the official US position. The American administration still refuses to recognise the right of our people to self-determination, and it still refuses to engage in a dialogue with the PLO, which our people have confirmed on all possible occasions to be their sole legitimate representative and which alone possesses the right to represent them and to speak on their behalf on every issue.

"The continuation of this US position will not serve the interest of peace in the Middle East. It will have a negative effect not only on the future of the peoples of this area but also on American and Western interests in the Middle East. We believe the time has come for the American administration to reappraise its present policy and commitments to Israel, especially those commitments which no longer have any practical value.

"We thus present to you on paper the following facts, and we request that these be conveyed to your country's officials, and especially to President Ronald Reagan:

"1. The Palestinian people in the occupied territories are only part of the entire Palestinian people. A third of our people resides in its homeland while two-thirds are in exodus. Therefore, any settlement to the Palestinian problem must address the entire problem, and not simply the people under occupation.

"2. The Palestinian problem is a national and political problem. It is reflected in the insistence of the Palestinian people on attaining its national rights, including, foremost, its right to self-determination, the establishment of its independent state on its national soil, as well as its integral right to choose a representative of its own volition, without external pressure or guardianship.

"3. Our people has affirmed on more than one occasion, inside the occupied territories and outside, that it has chosen the PLO as its sole legitimate representative. Our people views this act of volition as an expression of one of its inalienable basic rights.

"4. Direct dialogue with the PLO is a necessary condition for moving in the right direction and for opening up the possibility of attaining peace.

"5. Our support of the PLO under the leadership of Yasir Arafat is unshakable. We demand that the PLO be addressed in every matter concerning the Palestinian problem.

"6. We request that the American administration immediately address the problem of trying to put an end to Israeli practices in occupied Arab territories, especially those practices which are connected with settlement, land expropriation, violation of human rights, and attempts to suffocate the national spirit of our Palestinian youth.

"We hope that you will convey our point of view to your administration."

Signatories of the letter and those attending the meeting with Murphy were: Haj Rashad al-Shawwa, lawyer Anwar al-Khatib, Hikmat al-Masri, Thafer al-Masri, Mustafa al-Natshe, Elias Freij, Ibrahim Tawil, Amin al-Naser, Dr Amin Majaj, Hanna Siniora, lawyer Zuheir al-Rayes, Hanna al-Atrash, Said Kana'an, Dr Amin al-Khatib, lawyer Ziad Abu Ziad, Mansour al-Shawwa, Dr Adib al-Qaisi, lawyer Fayez Abu Rahmeh, lawyer Anwar Nusseibeh, Reverend Odeh Rantisi, Fayez al-Qawasmeh, Nabil Ja'bari, Mohammed Milhem, Ibrahim Saqqa, Izz al-Din al-Aryan, Basel Hamdi Kana'an, Issam al-Shawwa, Khaled Issaileh, Othman al-Hallaq, Issam al-Anani, Farah al-A'raj, Dr Akram Matar, Jamil Sabri Khalaf, Hashem al-Saleh, Wasef Shkukani, Mahmoud al-Qawwas, Ibrahim Abd al-Hadi and Gabi Baramki.

The Haifa-based *Al Ittihad*, published by the Israeli Communist Party, reported April 17 that other West Bank figures, including *Al Tali'a* editor Bashir al-Barghouthi, were invited to the cocktail party but declined to attend. *Al Ittihad*, along with *Al Tali'a* weekly and *Al Mithaq* daily, criticised those who attended the meeting with the US official. *Al Ittihad* and *Al Tali'a* particularly criticised the fact that the petition which the group handed to Murphy did not mention the proposal for an international conference to solve the Palestinian problem.

Al Fajr and *Al Sha'ab* dailies reprinted on their front pages the text of the letter given to Murphy and the names of signatories. *Al Quds* gave the meeting a short front-page report.

Murphy arrived in Jordan April 13 for an "exploratory" tour of the area, which includes visits to Jordan, Israel, Syria, and Egypt. Soon after his arrival in Amman, he held lengthy meetings with Jordan's King Hussein, Prime Minister Zaid Rifa'i, and Foreign Minister Taher al-Masri. One of the subjects under discussion was the Jordanian-Palestinian joint delegation proposal for peace negotiations.

Murphy's second stop was in Israel, where he met with top Israeli government officials, including Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the director-general of the foreign ministry, David Kimche.

The Dawn
AL FAJR
AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

Publisher:
Paul A. Ajlouny
Editor:
Hanna Siniora

Tel: (02) 281035
P.O. Box 19315
East Jerusalem

Telex no.s:
Jerusalem: 26467 omar il
Washington: 64677 omar uw

Al Fajr was founded in 1972 by Yusef Nasr, who edited the paper until his kidnapping in 1974. The English edition was first published in April 1980. **The Dawn (Al Fajr) Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly (UPS 686630)** is published weekly for $50.00 per year by Paul Ajlouny, 16 Crowell St., Hempstead. N.Y. 11550. Second class postage paid at Hempstead, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Al Fajr 2025 I Street, N.W., Suite 925, Washington D.C., 20006.

Prisoners' Day

April 17 every year, the Palestinian people all over the world remember their sisters and brothers who have been imprisoned in Israeli jails for their political beliefs. Especially since the 1967 occupation, thousands of Palestinians have been imprisoned by the Israeli authorities in an attempt to crush even the spirit of resistance to the occupation.

The treatment by the Israeli government toward these prisoners has been in violation of international laws and agreements. First and foremost in the system of maltreatment is the Israeli disregard of the fact that Palestinian prisoners are prisoners of war protected by the international regulations. For the past 18 years Palestinian political prisoners constantly faced systematic Israeli attempts to crush their bodies and minds and have thus earned the honour and respect of their own people and all peace-loving peoples in the world.

Dozens of prisoners have sacrificed their lives for their cause. Hundreds have become permanently disabled while on the path of this struggle. Hundreds of others have suffered silently and alone the torment of torture.

Palestinian prisoners have proven that despite the Israeli power, with all the material and psychological force Israel exerts on Palestinians, they, and the people they belong to, own one important factor that no force in the world can obliterate: their tremendous will and determination to free themselves and to free their people. The prisoners' cause is in the heart of every Palestinian until freedom.

AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: ONE YEAR: US$50.00

NAME. . . . . .

ADDRESS. . . . . .

ENCLOSED IS A CHEQUE FOR THE AMOUNT . . . . . .

DATE. . . . . .

SIGNED . . . . . .

Mail to:
Al Fajr Palestinian Weekly
PO Box 19315
East Jerusalem
Via Israel

In US:
Al Fajr Palestinian Weekly
2025 Eye St. NW, Suite 925
Washington DC, 20006 USA

Arab Americans Launch New Institute

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, DC Correspondent

Has the Arab American community really "come of age"? According to a letter distributed by the newly established Arab American Institute (AAI), the answer is definitely yes, and proof is a two-day conference in Washington for about 150 Arab Americans which included a short meeting with President Reagan. Omar Khader of The Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Commitee, on the other hand, was disappointed with the conference. He termed the meeting with Reagan a "pat on the head," nothing more.

AAI is another new Arab American organisation that is aimed at encouraging the participation of Arab Americans in the American political system. "By means of educational research and organisational projects, the AAI will work for the advancement of Arab American leadership on all levels of US society," read a recent AAI statement. The conference, a "Leadership Training Project," took place on March 1-2 and offered the conferees meetings with a variety of administration officials as well as members of the US Congress. Out of the 150, eight had a chance to meet for "about 10-15 minutes" with President Reagan, including George Salem, who founded AAI together with Jim Zogby, the former ADC executive director. In an announcement dated January 22 about the conference Zogby and Salem stated that the Arab American community "will start a new page in history," as reflected in the increased political influence Arab Americans "exercised in the 1984 [American presidential] election."

The "Building Tomorrow Conference," as Zogby and Salem called the weekend activity, included a welcoming reception at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia on Thursday, February 28, a White House tour, and briefing by various congressional and administrative officials, amongst other engagements.

Differing Views

In a telephone interview on March 3, Salem insisted that "Arab Americans made political history last weekend." On the other hand, Khader, the new ADC director who also attended the conference and the meeting with President Reagan, said that the same "Arab Americans were stunned and appalled at the White House's" overall treatment of the 150 conference participants.

Khader said the group was stunned "when the official White House packet handed out to them contained an Israeli-prepared propaganda document criticising Palestinians." The document referred to by Khader was published by *The White House Digest*. The contents of the July 1983 issue of *The White House Digest* (WHD), referred to above, were prepared by the Jewish Institute for National Security (JINSA). The July 1983 WHD, entitled "The PLO in Central America," was prepared with the intention of recruiting support for President Reagan's plans for Nicaragua from American liberals who oppose his policies in Central America, particularly Nicaragua, while unequivocally supporting Israel. Reagan and his aides know that referring to the PLO as a friend of Nicaragua will help neutralise some liberals' opposition. In order to achieve the same ends, experts believe, accusations of anti-Semitism were leveled against the Sandinista government, only to be refuted later by an American Jewish group who went to Managua to see the facts themselves.

The *Digest* tries hard to show that the PLO is involved in Central America, a fact which neither the PLO nor Sandinista leaders deny, but its influence is exaggerated by both the White House and American friends of Israel. In addition, on page 3 of the *Digest*, Yasir Arafat's picture appears with PLO printed across it and 22 arrows pointing in all directions to the names of "terrorist" organisations worldwide, naturally aiming at implicating the PLO in world "terror" – even at charging it with masterminding all "terror."

Ed Lench, editor of WHD, said in a phone interview that the July 1983 issue, like all other WHD issues, was "put together by the office of Public Liaison on Central America..." Lench said that he had not been the editor of WHD in July of 1983 and rejected interpreting the diagram on page 3 as labelling the PLO a terrorist organisation. The State Department's formal definition of the PLO is that it is an umbrella organisation, some members of which pursue acts of terrorism.

The caption below the diagram on page 3 reads: "Intelligence information has linked the PLO with terrorist and guerrilla organisations around the world." Lench's further reading of the diagram was that the word "linked with" can mean "a variety of things from actual hand-and-glove participation in operations, to moral support, to speeches in which Arafat may have expressed sympathy towards the other groups." Asked if he knew the diagram on page 3 and almost all of the piece was published by the Jewish Institute for National Security in their June 1983 newslettter, Lench said, "No, I can't confirm that." He added that he wasn't working with the Office of Public Liaison, which puts out WHD, at the time. He did "reiterate the point that all the information in the WHD is checked for both accuracy and consistency" with administration policy since it represents White House views.

The July 20, 1983 issue of *The White House Digest* was prepared not only for the purpose of attracting support for Reagan's Central American policy but also, and especially, to focus on the PLO's ties or "links" to world terrorism. A look at the footnotes reveals that the sources used were mostly written by Israeli and American Jews. In fact, a whole chapter almost word for word, as well as the diagram on page 3, were simply copied from the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) newsletter. JINSA is based in Washington, DC and its board of advisors includes Senator Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota, Jack Kemp of New York, Max Kampelman, and Eugene Rustow, among others.

George Salem, co-cordinator of AAI, disputed Khader's account of the document in question. He insisted that "the document was not in the packet" handed to the visiting Arab group. Salem added that "they were very apologetic about it." It so happened, he said, that there had just been a briefing by the White House to another group on Central America and Nicaragua. "These documents were for use in that meeting," he continued, admitting that "...the document is an offensive" one.

Salem refuted another point mentioned in ADC's press release, which had asserted that Reagan "clearly had no intention of discussing the Middle East and said so." "That is simply untrue," said Salem. "Reagan did not say that" and he did answer some questions on the Middle East, Salem added. Two members of the Palestine National Council (PNC), Jawad George and Samir Totah, both from Ramallah, were also present at the meeting with Reagan. Totah reportedly asked a question and received an answer from Reagan.

Salem also disagrees with Khader's press release because it states that Undersecretary of State Murphy "was oblivious to any cases of mistreatment of Arab Americans visiting Israel" and that Secretary Murphy "is either extremely isolated... or worse yet, ignores the facts" about Israeli mistreatment of visiting Arab Americans. Salem claims that the above statement "is very,

Continued on page 13

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Enlightenment Behind Bars

by A. Clare Brandabur

"Don't feel sorry for me, Doctora. We meet our *real* teachers in prison."

As a new teacher in a Palestinian university on the occupied West Bank, I was at first somewhat affronted at this declaration by a student who had been absent from class for a month and reappeared looking gaunt and emaciated.

"You have many books, Miss," he explained, sensing my question. "But these men *are* books."

He spoke. I learned gradually, of the heroes of the Palestinian resistance — men and women who have devoted their lives to the Palestinian cause. Some of the leaders have been expelled only to be assassinated in Beirut or Rome or Paris. Some are engaged in the work of a de facto government-in-exile in one faction or another of the PLO. Others are serving long terms in Israeli prisons where they undergo appalling hardships and where they continue to think, to study, to teach, and sometimes to die.

What are these teachers like, I wondered? How do they influence the young prisoners who come into contact with them? Three remarkable individuals helped me to arrive at a variety of answers to these questions.

Hamzeh

On a visit to Maqassad Hospital in East Jerusalem I happened to meet a Palestinian who had served nine years of a fifteen-year sentence in Ramle prison, much of it in the prison hospital. He was dying of cancer and had an ugly, partially unhealed scar across his abdomen.

The orderly who had helped him to his room and from the stretcher into the hospital bed told me Hamzeh's history. Though the two had been prison cell mates for four years, the orderly (whom I will call Mahmoud) did not recognise his old friend in the admitting room until he read his name on the medical records, so altered was his appearance since they had seen each other.

Sentenced for taking part in the resistance, Hamzeh was tortured, beaten while being hanged by his ankles or, at other times, by his wrists, left for hours naked in a cold cell, put under a cold shower and then left outside. When his health failed he was put in the Ramle prison hospital where he received abominable treatment and witnessed similar treatment of other prisoners.

At last, when it was obvious that he was dying, a medical committee reviewed his case and decided to release Hamzeh to prevent his dying in prison. The Secret Service (or *Shin Bet*) tried to exact a last pound of flesh: withholding the fact that he was to be released anyway, they offered to release him on condition that he collaborate with them, telling him that all his colleagues had become spies.

"I do not believe you," he said. "But if they have become spies, it is I who will kill them. I will never work for you."

Hamzeh was dead within six weeks, but not before he was able to spend time with his little daughter, who was his pride and joy. I learned from Hamzeh about steadfastness in the face of death, and became aware for the first time of the condition of the Palestinian prisoners.

Ahmad

During the summer of 1982 when the Israeli assault on Lebanon was at its height, Ahmad was in a class which I was teaching just before the university was closed. He was taken with several other students in the middle of the night, first to Ramallah prison, from which they were then transferred to the recently opened al-Fara'a prison, an old Jordanian prison toward the Jordan Valley from Nablus. It came to be used as a concentration camp by the Israelis, especially for the detention of very young Palestinians suspected of throwing stones or participating in any kind of political activity.

When he was released I expressed alarm at his appearance and then asked him to allow me to document his experience so that we could make an accurate record and take it to advocate Felicia Langer. In her capable hands it became the basis of a two-year compilation of human rights violations in al-Fara'a prison and is now on record in the Israeli Supreme Court. What amazed me about Ahmad was his maturity and presence of mind — his power of analysis and decisiveness under extreme duress. He had carefully noted the time of the arrest, estimated the length of time of the initial interrogation, the length of time which elapsed before the prisoners were given food and water, the time when they were loaded into a truck and taken to al-Fara'a. And he constantly analysed the behavior of the interrogators and the guards.

He was keenly aware, for example, that the inadequate portions of food and the absurdly short time allowed in which to eat it were designed to make them compete against each other like starving animals, and Ahmad refused to eat. He incurred extra beatings because he was so aware of his obligation to act as an example to younger prisoners and to intervene on behalf of those who were ill or whose lives he felt were in danger. He demanded medical care for a student known to have a heart condition who was beaten unconscious because he was physically unable to keep his arms above his head for the required time. Ahmad antagonised the guards by leading a delegation to protest the conditions under which they were held.

This calm, self-effacing young man told me that he had learned how to anticipate the brutality of the Israelis and to prepare himself psychologically to deal with it. One must never allow them to be masters of the situation, he said. This is part of resistance, and he had learned it in previous imprisonments.

Sufian

Another student, Sufian, was an amazing person to have in class. He was brilliant and articulate, always prepared by not only having the assigned text read but familiar with a wide variety of related material as well. Like Ahmad, he was concerned not only for himself but for the others in the class as well. "Miss," he would often say, "may I explain in Arabic? Some of the students do not understand." And he would proceed to lead a lively discussion of the text.

On closer acquaintance I learned that this extraordinary young man had acquired much of his basic education in prison. From age 14 to 19 he was in an Israeli prison and it was there that he learned to study, to think, to argue, to ask questions, and to communicate his knowledge to others. A natural leader, he was committed to the education of his comrades. While he excelled in class, he never competed against other students for grades but had a real sense that class time should be used for the common good. Charming and witty, he was quick to intervene if he sensed that someone else was having difficulty, alleviating embarassment or shyness among less confident members of the class, so tactful that his strong sense of justice was never oppressive or pompous. It was in the setting of the prison classroom that he acquired this social responsibility.

While the prison experience can be destructive and even fatal and should by no means be romanticised, still I came to respect the enormous positive achievement of the Palestinians under such arduous circumstances.

My great hope for a solution to the Palestinian problem which would free these prisoners has grown steadily stronger since I came to understand what my students meant when they said,

"Don't pity us, Miss. We meet our real teachers in prison!" ■

A. Clare Brandabur, a resident of Seattle, Wisconsin in the US, taught English literature at Bir Zeit University from 1981-1984.

Letter to Editor

Goldberg Misquoted

To the Editor:

An unfortunate, hopefully unintentional, editorial misquotation marred your publication of my interview with Denis Goldberg in last week's *Al Fajr*. Your pull-quote, blown up large in the text, seems to attribute a statement on the subject of Israel to Goldberg which in fact he did not make.

I had a professional agreement with Goldberg that our interview would not touch upon the issue of Israel and Zionism, as Goldberg had been persistently misquoted and maligned on this matter in the Hebrew press during his short stay in this country.

Joost R. Hiltermann

Editor's Note: The quotation referred to came from the head of the South African prison where Goldberg was held and is not a direct quote from Goldberg himself. We apologise for any inconvenience to the interviewer or interviewee. ■

Women's Centre Principal Wins Case Against UNRWA

by Daoud Kuttab

A special panel established in the Vienna headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to decide disputes between UNRWA employees and administrators recently issued a ruling on the Asia Habash case. The case stirred up a lot of controversy in the West Bank two years ago when Habash, principal of the Ramallah Women's Training Centre and an UNRWA employee, was dismissed. On February 8, 1985 a panel of adjudicators, made up of three impartial law professors, overruled that decision and ruled that Habash should be reinstated.

For employees and general staff of UNRWA, the Vienna decision opens up an avenue for appealing decisions to a central body whose decisions are not mere recommendations but judgements binding upon UNRWA's commissioner general and the organisation as a whole.

History

The background of the case is full of complex details and hints of larger accusations thus far unproven. On April 19, 1983 Habash was requested to appear along with other employees in front of a board of inquiry to be appointed by the director of UNRWA operations in Palestine, Roy Skinner. When she did so, Habash was surprised to hear the nature of the inquiry, which called into question her sense of responsibility and personal values.

Habash, shocked by the nature of the inquiry, including Skinner's oral firing, submitted her resignation from her UNRWA post after 22 years of service. The resignation was quickly accepted. After she had thought about it a little, she later decided to withdraw the resignation, which she said was submitted "under emotional duress" UNRWA officials, however, would not allow her to do so. As an employee, Habash could not even appeal the decision.

But Habash did not give up. By mid-June, she had convinced UNRWA to let the Joint Appeals Board decide whether her appeal was "receivable." On August 23, 1983, the appeals board of UNRWA officials found that "there had been irregularities and bias in the way administrative procedures were conducted." The board also found that "denying Habash the opportunity to withdraw her resignation was unfair, unjust, and prejudicial." In its report, the board referred to a letter from Skinner to UNRWA's legal advisor dated April 30, 1983 in which Skinner requested "almost blind support" for his decisions concerning Habash. Hence the withdrawal of Habash's resignation was allowed.

In the second round of the case, Habash filed an appeal pertaining to the substance of the accusations that had been levied against her. In its report of December 2 on this appeal, the Joint Appeals Board (JAB) recommended "the reinstatement of Habash" after it found the accusations against her "prejudiced." But despite the recommendations of the JAB, UNRWA's Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck refused to "accept the JAB's findings." Rydbeck did not specify why he rejected the recommendations. This left Habash no alternative but to bring her case to the panel of adjudicators.

Charges

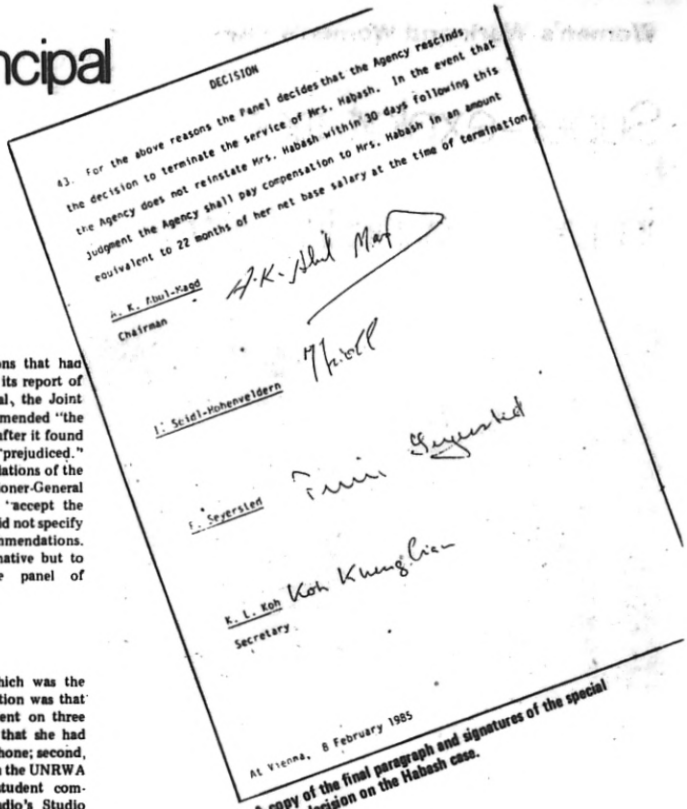
The main charge which was the basis for Habash's termination was that she exercised bad judgement on three different occasions. First, that she had disconnected the guards' phone; second, that she had failed to inform the UNRWA administration about a student complaint aired on Israel Radio's Studio One programme; and finally, that she had "overlooked" the fact that resident house mother Mayssara Jallad had received a male visitor in her quarters regularly over two years. After studying Habash's oral testimonies and UNRWA's written testimony, the special panel ruled in favour of Habash on February 8 and ordered "the agency to rescind the decision to terminate her services."

The panel wrote that it "doubted that disconnecting the phones amounted to bad judgement"; considered the Studio One incident "too trivial"; and ruled that the incident with the house mother was "minor" and did not "justify the termination of Habash's employment after more than 22 years of service."

House mother Jallad, who was also fired, was not so fortunate. The special panel examined her case separately. It exonerated her of bad behaviour but rejected — in a split vote — her request to be reinstated. Two of the three judges ruled that Jallad showed bad judgement even though the visitor was a relative and came in the afternoons and not at night.

The special panel's decision calls for Habash's reinstatement. Realising however, that it couldn't force an administration to rehire an employee it doesn't want, the panel added: "In the event that the agency doesn't reinstate Habash within 30 days following this judgement, the agency shall pay compensation to Habash in an amount equivalent to 22 months of her net base salary at the time of termination."

The one area of controversy which the panel didn't rule on was whether Habash's firing had been politically motivated, a charge that Habash and others had previously made. In the report, which included testimony from all of the involved parties, Habash's letter of June 4, 1984 to the panel was reprinted, where she stated that she believed "a deal was struck between the director of UNRWA operations, Roy Skinner, and the Israeli authorities to have me removed from my post."



DECISION

43. For the above reasons the Panel decides that the Agency rescinds the decision to terminate the service of Mrs. Habash. In the event that the Agency does not reinstate Mrs. Habash within 30 days following this Judgment the Agency shall pay compensation to Mrs. Habash in an amount equivalent to 22 months of her net base salary at the time of termination.

A. K. Abul-Magd
Chairman

I. Seidl-Hohenveldern

F. Seyersted

K. L. Koh
Secretary

At Vienna, 8 February 1985

A copy of the final paragraph and signatures of the special panel's decision on the Habash case.

Habash Responds

Habash, who returned to Jerusalem recently, talked with *Al Fajr* staff about the panel's decision. There is more to the case than meets the eye, she said. In fact, she felt the issue was a political one. As a result of her own investigation into the incident, she was able to obtain what she felt was proof of her opinion that the firing resulted from political pressure, particularly pressure on UNRWA from the Israeli military anxious to stamp out any show of resistance to the occupation at any of UNRWA's institutions.

After a student demonstration, the Israelis closed the Ramallah Women's Training Centre for two months. Habash, as principal, was called in for questioning in mid-December. She was then ordered to return for further questioning January 3, 1983. Believing she would be charged and desiring to avoid such a clash, Skinner intervened with the Israeli military authorities and went to be interrogated in her stead. He sat through 11 sessions of interrogation on her behalf, an experience he later told her "was the most humiliating of my life." It was during this period, Habash said, that Skinner became convinced that she must leave.

Habash was able to get hold of a confidential letter sent from Skinner to Commissioner-General Rydbeck dated January 1, 1983. Skinner's letter, sent a few months before she was fired, specifies that the Israeli authorities have informed him that they will hold the principals of UNRWA's educational institutions responsible for any disturbances. Skinner goes on to say that the Israeli military authorities "wish that some strong action be taken against Habash" and that the Israelis have been "dissatisfied with her performance for the past two to three years." Skinner then explains to the commissioner-general that "it would be difficult to assert immunity" if Habash has to be tried, and concludes his letter by saying that this "matter should be handled without fuss."

When Habash was asked why the panel minimised the political charges, she said they had felt that she won the case hands down without having to resort to the "circumstantial evidence." Habash also said that the panel did not want to embarrass UNRWA further by probing into such a highly controversial issue.

Habash told *Al Fajr* that during the period she was head of the training centre, she refused to comply with the directives of the Israeli authorities. "I refused to act as a censor and a policewoman for the activities of my students," she said. Habash also said she refused to provide the Israeli authorities with names of students who had been involved in political demonstrations.

Since Habash's resignation, a number of changes in UNRWA personnel have taken place. Field Director Skinner has been transferred out of the area. It is not known whether his move is related to the Habash case or not.

For employees, the Habash case decision shows that they have an independent avenue to which they can address their grievances. For UNRWA officials the decision serves as a warning that unsubstantiated decisions against employees will be closely scrutinised.

Palestinians can also see in the decision a review and analysis of the whole question of UNRWA's mandate and its relations with the Israeli military authorities.

Many of the questions raised by the decision may not be answered for a long time. Whether this decision will effect a reform in UNRWA operations or in its relations with the Israeli military authorities remains to be seen. ■

Super-exploitation in the Sewing Industry

West Bank women are the backbone of the local sewing industry.

by Flavia Pesa

Shaul walks into the second-floor factory — a poured concrete block room of small tables and five stopping-and-starting sewing machines — and plunks down cut material: necks, sleeves, bodices, and backs. He will return in a week to pick up finished T-shirts, complete with MADE IN ISRAEL Hebrew labies, and bring more work from Tel Aviv textile factories to Palestinian sweatshop labourers.

More West Bank and Gaza women work in this basic industry than in any other; and there are more employees and workplaces involved in the sewing and tailoring industry than in any other. In a study conducted five years ago by the Women's Work Committee of 250 women factory workers in the Ramallah district, 60 percent performed sewing and tailoring work. A leading Bethlehem unionist estimates that in the West Bank 15 percent of the women labour force (which is 30 percent of the total labour force) is involved in sewing. Most of this work force is largely dependent on the Israeli garment industry and subject to its currency, seasonal, and export market fluctuations, even when workers remain in their homes or in Palestinian-run factories rather than working directly in an Israeli workplace such as West Jerusalem's Talpiot factories.

Many of the local workshops which opened five and six years ago have been forced to close in the last year or two. Those which remained open have actually lowered workers' wages, despite the ever-rising cost of living, or increased workers' hours in order to hang on to subcontracting deals from Israeli firms. Women have paid the price — either by being fired or superexploited.

The labourers in this small factory in Abu Dis, on the eastern edge of Jerusalem, are all young women, in their late teens or early twenties — and unmarried. The women spend eight hours a day, six days a week, working as fast as possible at their blinding, boring work, shoulders hunched over machines. For each *qitt'a*, a segment of finished work, they are paid US$.34, but half this amount goes into the pocket of their employer, the Abu Dis family who owns the building and machines, pays the utilities, and deals with the Israeli manufacturer.

Workers in Harness

On average the five women workers — who include the sister of the owner — can finish 10 pieces per day, for a monthly wage of about JD20 or IS40,000. Even this miniscule amount of money is by no means guaranteed. There is no work brought during the many and long Jewish holidays, and the weeks when machines and women sit idle can stretch into months during the winter off-season. Furthermore, the women workers are paid in Israeli shekels, at an exchange rate calculated at the beginning of the month. The astronomical inflation rate, coupled with periodic price increases, can erode their wages by as much as 15 to 20 percent by payday. The piecemeal rate varies according to the difficulty of the sewing and size of the piece, but the daily piecemeal wage for a West Bank woman averages at US$1-1.5 per day in the sewing "sweatshops." In the Hebron district, women workers are paid least; one seamstress has made no more than JD10 monthly for the last five years. In Jericho, women workers complain that when machines stop during frequent electricity cut-offs, there is no compensation for the lost time.

New employees — who usually are replacements, often from the same family, for women workers who have left to marry — are paid at the same rate as long-time workers. Despite the feudal atmosphere, there are seldom open or continuing grievances between workers and Arab factory owners because the semi-skilled workers can so easily be replaced. There are many more potential workers than work to be had.

Yet Salima, a 29-year-old unmarried woman with a third grade education (whose six brothers are university graduates), fought her father for three years to have a chance to work in such a sweatshop. "I was bored at home," she says, "and wanted to earn a little money for myself." Only three women from her Jerusalem area village work directly in Israeli textile factories. Although the pay is better, the inconvenience of transportation, the alienation of the work place, and traditional family disapproval of unmarried women leaving the village for work makes outside work undesirable.

Salima, who keeps the money she makes for herself, is a member of the Abu Dis Public Institutions Workers' Union. She joined the union, she says, from boredom with her home-to-work routine, rather than to fight for better working conditions. Her employer is her neighbour and her real paymaster is someone in Tel Aviv whom she has never seen.

A Ramallah businessman who himself initiated a local sewing cooperative made a study recently of the local sewing industry; he estimates that 3600 to 4000 West Bank workers are involved in subcontracting from Israeli textile manufacturers. This is in addition to seamstress workers and tailors who work independently or who cut and sew their own designs but occasionally take in Israeli work. A Ramallah unionist uses the same figure for only her local district.

Cogs in the Wheel

A West Bank "sewing factory" conforms to no stereotypical image of an industrial workplace. The setting can be a village or refugee camp home with one and at most two machines financed by father or brothers or a local agent. At the other end of the scale is a modern factory of 50 industrial machines and equipment to process textiles from yarn to packaging.

The most common sewing workroom remains the home, and women are the primary work force. It is impossible to know or even estimate how many Palestinian women are involved in this form of home labour. The women have contact only with the Arab hustler who delivers the cut material, picks up the work, sets pay rates, and is the middleman with the Tel Aviv manufacturers. His "cut" for his legwork is anywhere between 10 and 50 percent of the amount of the subcontract.

Usually there is one woman worker, an unmarried sister for example, who is a highly skilled seamstress and who becomes superexploited. Without work hours or pay scale, it is she who is responsible that the quota promised to the Israeli manufacturer is met. "She can make JD150 but she kills herself to do it," said one large factory owner. "But," he offered, "she considers it better than a factory where she would have more difficult work." A bigger point may be the fact that the woman worker must balance other work with the sewing — child care, cooking, cleaning, marketing, and other family responsibilities — which she could not do away from the home. Being a cog in the huge Israeli textile industry, even at rock bottom wages, is the only productive work she has available, given her social situation.

A husband and wife team in Beit Sahour has been in the sewing business for 16 years. Abu Issa first worked with his father, then a neighbour, sewing under such labels as Avi Model, Gilo, and Dan Cassidy — all Tel Aviv manufacturers. Five years ago was boom-time for garment workers in the occupied territories. Then, Abu Issa says, they were paid by the dollar and could earn US$2.5 per day per worker if they completed five easy pieces. At that time the little workshop had four employees, but many more workers entered the market just as Israeli business took a nosedive. Now Abu Issa and his wife Basma get US$1-1.5 for the same amount of work. The price depends on the amount of work on hand in the Israeli factory.

Erratic Schedules

"One hundred pieces per week is the maximum quota we can fill — and we usually work 10 to 12 hours to meet the deadlines. Half the year, during winter, there is no work at all. We average a monthly income of JD50. We survive on it because we built our house ourselves and — we have God's help," Abu Issa says, looking up only slightly from his sewing machine. Piles of yellow cotton ruffled bodices are strung together and piled on the floor. His biggest problem, he says, is that the Israeli manufacturers now pay in shekels and delay payments sometimes by one to two months to use the dropping value of Israeli currency to their advantage.

In village or camp workshops, *shughl al-banat* (literally, giris' work) is exploited to its fullest. The three to five machine factories have simple Japanese industrial lockstitch and overlock machines and sew low-cost basic garments. The women are hired according to unknown conditions and cannot bargain for better wages — the situation Salima of Abu Dis found herself in. Wages set in shekels at the end of the month can reach as low as JD8-10 but could also be tied up with quotas which must be made up on overtime. The owner of the workplace, who negotiates with the representative of the Israeli manufacturer, pockets the equivalent of 100 percent of what the wage-earners make.

Although the system is "relatively inefficient" — "workers' productivity is one-third to one-fourth what it is in a well-run factory with suitable equipment," according to the Ramallah sewing industry expert — virtually every Israeli textile manufacturer still uses this form of cheap, subcontracted Palestinian labour for seasonal surplus work. And such workshops rely entirely on the Israeli companies and fold when piecemeal work falls through. The workers do not have the technical expertise and owners, for whom the workshops are a sideline, lack the motivation to invest in their own start-to-finish garment production.

The third level of 10-20 machine workshops are more stable, more ambitious, and tend to pay better wages. These moderate-sized factories market their own styles and try to use Israeli subcontracting only to supplement their production, according to a board member of a Ramallah sewing cooperative. His cooperative, he says, has used such deals with Israeli manufacturers to learn patterning techniques, regularise large work loads, and set up production schedules. But the cooperative, which pays its workers an average salary of JD85, must cover for the drop in income necessitated by subcontracting by using its capital assets to cover wages: not a lucrative proposition in the long run. One Beit Sahour factory of 15 women workers subcontracts exclusively from the major Israeli textile conglomerate of Pol-Gat. The steady work allows the owner to pay monthly salaries — still no more than JD45 — but a guaranteed income whatever the work and currency fluctuations. However, this kind of an arrangement is not common.

Maverick Factory

A Ras al-Amud factory of 12 workers struck out against subcontracting from Israelis after a series of bad experiences. "Subcontracting isn't worth it, " says owner Mohammed, an enterprising 25-year-old whose family lives above the six-room factory. "To the Israelis, speed is important and they are unreliable. They would find 'mistakes' in production and end up paying lower rates or just leaving the goods in factory." His factory has gradually become an all-Palestinian enterprise.

Mohammed and his brother began with a small workshop in Ram, north of Jerusalem, but closed it because of the difficulty and expense workers had in commuting, some from as far away as Hebron. The factory in Ras al-Amud opened in June with workers from the immediate area. The youngest is 14, most are 18 or 19, and a few are over 20-years-old. Seven work on the machines while others cut, clean threads, and sort.

At the beginning the young women were paid from JD35-65 but as productivity increased, Mohammed raised wages to JD50 for new workers and JD100 for veterans. Twenty-year-old Siham, who was made factory manager, earns JD120. The women see no reason to join a union because their situation is so much better than other factory workers. They have good rapport with the owner and have been promised a percentage of the profits at the end of the year.

Continued on page 15

EVEN THE "BEST" FACTORIES EXPLOIT

THE TRIANGLE — In the very "best" of Um al-Fahm's five textile factories Majida Suidan works six days a week, eight hours a day and makes IS100,000. (Minimum wage for an Israeli registered worker was IS140,000 at the beginning of the year). There are 22 workers at the factory whose labour Majida's uncle sells to Israeli companies. The women have no annual vacation, get the Jewish *sabbath* off instead of their own Muslim holiday of Friday and are given presents on holidays.

All 350 textile workers in the town are women and unmarried. Most did not finish high school. At the other factories conditions are worse, hours are longer, pay is less. Israeli companies have so far stayed out of the town: an Israeli tanning factory which employs only men lies outside Um al-Fahm's borders, and Israeli Pol-Gat owns a sock factory which employs 15 women, along with a separate men's factory, at the entrance to the town.

The factories inside are all run by local Arab labour contractors for Israeli firms such as Lugia, Liz, and Delta from Tel Aviv. The contractors, usually big landowners, supply the machines, workers, material, and workplace — usually a room in their family house. They are invariably connected to the Israeli Labour Party and linked to the authorities, thwarting any sustained organising efforts to better conditions. When women do try to organise, one Um al-Fahm union sympathiser said, the Arab contractors go to the homes of their relatives and threaten to fire them.

Two years ago workers tried to organise a women's committee and got as far as putting out leaflets. They were fired from their jobs. The Histadrut, the official Israeli labour federation, did not help; the local workers' council is appointed, rather than elected, and the factory owners are directly involved in the council's operations.

"The women feel very strongly about their exploitation. The contractors, for example, never pay their cost-of-living increase in full," said the union activist. But as long as their employers remain their relatives and prominent villagers, the social structure inside the town reinforces their exploitation by Israeli manufacturers.

Exhaustion from the high-paced, low-pay, piecemeal labour shows clearly on the face of this Nablus seamstress.

The Ramallah Sewing Union Going Strong

by Manar Said

Since the 1967 occupation, the hopeless inadequacy of Jordanian labour laws — still in force in the West Bank, in all their ineffectiveness — has only been exacerbated by discriminatory Israeli policies aimed at completely stamping out economic life in the occupied territories. One result is that Palestinian women — already placed in a traditionally vulnerable position by their own society — are now more exploited than ever before. A complex matrix of parallel forces operates to keep these women pliant tools in the hands of many masters.

The picture is further complicated by Palestinians who cooperate with the Israelis in economically mining fellow Palestinians. For example, it is common for Palestinian foremen to recruit the busloads of seamstresses who commute "inside" for work. These foremen get a percentage of the workers' salaries as their own wage; profit motivates them to perpetuate the unfair system.

Karima Deeb, head of the Ramallah Sewing Union, told *Al Fajr* that only 10 percent of seamstresses from the Ramallah area are unionised — a total of 300. A good start, Deeb notes, although many members are still "afraid to speak out." No wonder: about 100 women have been fired from Israeli and Palestinian factories over the years because of their union activity.

The majority of West Bank seamstresses commute to work at Israeli factories inside the "green line" — Deeb estimates at least 60 to 70 percent (about 2000) from the Ramallah area work inside. There, the wages are higher than in the West Bank; of course, they are never as high for Palestinians as for Israelis. Deductions are made from their salaries for the Histadrut, the Israeli labour federation. As West Bank residents, these workers never see any of the benefits — health care, unemployment compensation, and so forth — that these deductions are supposed to bring them. The Histadrut — as a Zionist organisation — never has and never can represent workers from the occupied territories, so West Bank unionists encourage those who work "inside" to join their Palestinian unions. These workers are one of the main target groups for membership.

But the union fights for workers' rights in the West Bank too. Unfortunately, Palestinian sewing factory owners are often just as exploitative as their Israeli counterparts. Jordanian labour law does not require employers to sign contracts with employees. This — in addition to the job scarcity in the underdeveloped occupied territories — explains why wages remain at rock-bottom. The Ramallah Sewing Union — like all unions — is trying to fight this. As Deeb put it, "The boss is the leader. He has the right to fire, hire, silence, keep women poor and obedient... He is like a god!"

The Ramallah Sewing Union urges the need for collective contracts at the factories. Deeb explained, "Bosses are sometimes ready to make concessions regarding salaries and work breaks, but they are never prepared to put them down in contracts." Most arrangements are verbal, and new employees may not know how much they are earning until they have worked a full month. The Sewing Union also wants reasonable starting salaries. Deeb recalled one local factory where women with 12 years' seniority were still earning JD20 or 30 per month. The union recommends a starting salary of JD50, to be paid in dinars, not the usual shekels. Not surprisingly, the Sewing Union, representing an almost completely female work force, is demanding equal pay for equal work. According to social customs, men need to earn more than women because they have financial responsibility for their families. The dozen or so men in the sewing union make twice as much as women in the West Bank for the same work.

Other union demands are for a set work-day and work-week, with a one-day weekend, paid holidays on May Day, International Women's Day, a reasonable number of sick days (between 7 and 14 per year), and maternity leave. During the winter slump, many factory workers are let go and rehired in the spring as new employees. The union demands that employees not lose their seniority.

But "the main demand," in Deeb's opinion, is that Palestinian bosses even allow union activity and stop firing and blacklisting unionists. The union suggests a proviso be included in contracts permitting workers to elect union representatives. In addition, all West Bank unions demand that the Israeli Histadrut return the deductions from occupied territories workers' salaries to the treasury of the Palestinian unions, which would redistribute them as worker benefits.

So far the situation of the most exploited seamstresses of all — those who do piece work at home — has been little improved by the union, although all sewing workers regardless of their place of work may join the union. The ultra-depressed West Bank economy and their fragmented working situation have left these cottage workers — desperate for any source of income — unable to organise for pay increases.

The Ramallah Sewing Union is, however successfully running a health programme that provides a 10 to 15 percent discount on physicians' fees and pharmaceuticals for all union members. The union also teaches sewing workshops to show workers the complete process of manufacturing garments, in order to combat the assembly line methods taught in factories. All proceeds from products go to the workers' income.

Deeb cited another victory for the Ramallah Sewing Union. A year-and-a-half ago, a strike at the Dijani factory in Ramallah raised average salaries from JD40 to JD60. Starting salaries were doubled, from JD20 or 30 to JD50. Because the strike was organised at the factory itself, no employee could be fired for not working, nor could new employees be hired to replace them.

Deeb sees a long trail of such union-backed labour disputes before West Bank workers will ever be able to gain their rights. Yet for a union which is only five years old, the Ramallah Sewing Union is going strong and has already shown the staying power necessary to institute fair labour practices in the West Bank.

Crippled for Life

Israel Zamir of the Hebrew daily *Al Hamishmar* writes that the war in Lebanon — Israel's Vietnam — has brought a permanent change in the character, *raison d'etre*, and operations of the army, and drained the soldiers of all emotion or caring.

Israeli soldiers count their dead after a mysterious explosion destroyed their headquarters in Tyre in 1983. *"They have become moral and emotional cripples..."*

At midnight they arrive at the local disco. All they want is to forget about Lebanon and drown their memories in beer, cognac, and whiskey. But Lebanon is stuck in their gullets and they can neither swallow it down nor spew it out. So they drink, apologetically, in order to get stone drunk, in order to forget.

Listening to the soldiers who are now implementing the army's "iron fist" policy in Lebanon is a shocking experience. They have seen a whole set of moral norms shatter and have become fed up with everything Zionism stands for. Some of their best friends have been killed; others have pulled through — crippled for life.

Between rounds they speak their minds. They don't care if I listen in; in fact, they're glad to tell a civilian about what's going on up there. The disco loudspeakers blare out raucous music and from time to time they take a turn on the dance floor. When the music stops, they rejoin their companions, have another drink, and talk about their experiences in Lebanon, milking their bitterness to the last drop.

"If you want to survive in Lebanon, you have to keep your finger on the trigger at all times. Combing an orchard at night, you always feel that somebody is there, waiting to ambush you. So you spray the area with bullets. If you go out at night to cop a piss, you can get so frightened that you start trembling. You're in a hostile country and you don't have the faintest idea what you're doing there. You're totally preoccupied with trying to stay alive. And the fear of getting hit never leaves you for a second. There's no let-up. It's like a standing order. Your senses become sharper, you keep your eyes peeled, on the lookout because you never know when someone's going to choose you as his target. And you're always looking for some small corner where you can feel safe. When you finish your patrol duty and you go to bed, you can't fall asleep because you're so bloody anxious. So you talk with the other guys, right through the night."

National Mission to Be Killed

"What do we talk about? About everything. About what we plan to do when we finish our stint in the army. About how we're going to pack our bags and set out for the wide world. No, not for a trip. The idea is to find an American or Australian chick and drop anchor in California, Alaska, Australia — it doesn't matter so long as it's far away from Lebanon. Look, how do you expect us to feel about a country that elects a government that sends us out on a national mission to get killed or wounded? There are two guys from my high school class that have been wounded: one of them is going to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair, the other lost his sight. A third was killed. So what do you expect me to say? That it's good to die for the sake of one's country? That it's good to die for the sake of Lebanon?"

My interlocutor turned away and began humming along with the music. The disco smelled of beer and sweat. Bodies genuflected across the dance floor, paying homage to the god of noise. Another young fellow who appeared to be somewhat drunk tried to cheer me up: "Don't worry," he said, "everything will be OK. Whoever gets out alive doesn't have anything to worry about, and the dead, well, all their worries have been taken care of. Why don't you pay us a visit, up in Jibshit? Every time a journalist arrives up there, we give him a good show. Listen, you ought to come up and see what's happened to the Israeli army. It's not the army you remember. *It's an army that has lost all hope, that is not capable of defeating its enemy, that realises it doesn't have a chance.* The only thing the guys up there want is to make it to their next furlough without getting knocked off. Every night our officers lecture us about morality, democracy, and the objectives of the war; and then when we get up the next morning, we wade into the shit once again. Whoever wants to hang onto Lebanon has to be prepared to be totally ruthless: summary executions, expulsions, house demolitions, entire villages obliterated. But we're not built for that. The Syrians can wipe out thousands of people without batting an eyelash, but we can't — for the meantime.

"And the price for that is being a target — for roadside bombs, booby-trapped cars, grenades, landmines, etc. We're a conventional army and they're waging a guerrilla war. In a guerrilla war you have to employ guerrilla tactics, and we're not good at that. The upshot is that they're creaming us. You fire off a round of ammo, burst into a house, and start searching for arms. There isn't a house in Lebanon without its own private arms cache, because whoever doesn't have arms is a goner.

"Tonight on TV they showed an arms cache they found in the basement of some Shi'ite holyman. What a laugh! There's been a lot of talk about demolishing the terrorist infrastructure, but there are five or six infrastructures in every Lebanese home! They're laid out one on top of the other — you name it, guns, ammunition, the works! It's part of their tradition, part of their culture; it's a matter of life and death for them. But when they start talking about 'destroying the terrorist infrastructure' — well, I just have to laugh!

"Don't ask me about morality. In Lebanon, morality went on vacation. It died. You go into a village and you see a 12-year-old kid sauntering down the road. He's a nice looking kid, reminds me of my brother. So he waves and I wave back, and then, all of the sudden, he sets off an explosive charge and some of our guys get wounded. So what do you suggest? Shoot every kid I see?"

More drinks. Some new faces arrive. One of them says somberly, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorow you will die."

Political Line of Defence

"You know that we pulled out of Sidon and redeployed at a new line," a soldier on leave began telling me, "but you probably don't know that it's a far cry from a military line of defence. It starts west of the Litani and winds through hostile Shi'ite villages. Our regimental commander says, 'It's a political line,' but I want to know how the hell the army is supposed to take up a position on a political line in the middle of a war? There are no geographical features there that make it easy to defend. There's no fence cutting it off from the rest of the country, and when it comes down to it, there's nothing there! It's as though a surveyor came along and marked off a border. And there we are, with the Shi'ites in front of us and behind us. According to Rabin, we'll pull out of there in the course of the next three months. But that's a lot of time. Two days ago they gathered all the men from one of the villages up there and herded them into a local mosque. You should have seen their eyes. What hatred! What hostility! If you plunk yourself down in the middle of a hostile Shi'ite population, you have no choice but to harass them if you want to survive. The army's 'iron fist' simply means a policy of constant harassment. You blow up a terrorist's home and the *mukhtar* says: 'If you're going to blow up the homes of terrorists, you may as well blow up this whole village. We're all *muharibin*.'

"One day they brought us some lecturer from the university and he started in on a pedantic lecture about how the security of the Galilee depends on stability in Lebanon. We told him that that was all fine and dandy, but what we're doing in Lebanon isn't stabilising the situation any. It's harassment, terror, and repression. And the Lebanese aren't going to forget the degradation they suffered at our hands for years to come. They may just seek revenge, even after we've pulled back to the international border. So what's all this bull about stabilising the situation? The lecturer looked at our regimental commander and the RC looked at the lecturer and then they announced that the lecture was over."

Justification Getting Easier

"The worst thing is that we're getting used to justifying what's going on up there. Without a justification of some sort, it would be hard to stick it out. You find yourself looking for some kind of alternative moral framework, something other than the army's 'iron fist' policy, force, or 'talking to the Lebanese in the only language they understand.'"

They sat there in the disco, seeking some kind of an outlet for all their pent-up frustrations, for everything that has been troubling their consciences. They talked all night, trying to slough off the memory of the atrocities they'd witnessed in Lebanon. The word "slaughter" no longer gets them worked up, for it's clear to them that once the Israeli army pulls out, there will be all sorts of massacres. The Druze will slaughter the Christians, the Shi'ites will slaughter the Palestinians, and the Khomeini types will have a go at the Amal militias — a real free-for-all. The fellows I spoke with shrugged their shoulders. They're no longer shocked by anything. If the Sabra and Shatila massacre occurred today, I doubt it could generate enough shock to make them go out and demonstrate. To all intents and purposes, they've become emotionally and morally numb. I doubt that they'll find their way to Peace Now, because something inside them has snapped.

Moral and Emotional Cripples

The Lebanese war was horrible, but its after-effects may prove even more shocking. Those inducted into the army a few months prior to the outbreak of the war will soon be completing their tour of duty. Most of their military service was spent in Lebanon. They have become moral and emotional cripples as a result of their experiences. The Israeli government's decision to wage a war was also a calamity for all those who

Continued on page 13

Writer's Forum Hails Literature by Political Prisoners

In the years since the Israeli occupation of Palestine, a literary movement has flourished among Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons. The movement has spawned not only great interest among detainees in literature but has encouraged prisoners to write poems and short stories as a means of expressing their feelings about their own imprisonment and that of their homeland.

The writings of prisoners that reflect their perspective on life behind the walls and barbed wire and under strict supervision are important political and social documents reflecting this unique aspect of Palestinian culture. The prisoners' desire is for protection and self-preservation through education, perhaps the only way for them to deepen their understanding of philosophy, religion, literature, and language.

Inside the prison walls they organise forums, give lectures, and offer courses in different educational fields. We rarely to find an illiterate prisoner who has spent many years in jail. The prisoners develop their skills, some with great ability, in learning languages. Some are so knowlegeable of a wide range of topics that it is very difficult to record their rich life in one essay or in a single book.

The prisoners themselves seek to depict this life in poems and stories about torture, interrogation, executioners, tombs, and the more happy occasion of winning one's freedom and of obtaining national liberation after struggle. This is often described as the sun rising after a long night. Much of prison literature concerns women in the roles of mother, daughter, sister, lover, friend.

A prisoner receives a letter from his sweetheart or a photograph of his family or lover and shows the letter or photograph to his fellow comrades. Through the informal literature of letters and through his own writing he keeps in constant contact with life and events on the outside. It is often his knowledge of life outside prison that sparks him to write as a means of sifting through the events and of understanding their significance.

A special forum on the literature of prisoners was held in Jerusalem February 18 in which some 35 Palestinian writers and poets met to discuss the genres and themes of prisoners' work. Ibrahim Alam, a Bethlehem University lecturer of Arabic; Jamal Banoura, a local short story writer; and Adnan Sabbah, a prisoner in Israeli jails for seven years, spoke at the forum.

Under the title "Palestinian Poetry in Jail," Ibrahim Alam spoke on the themes in prisoners' poetry and their writing style. Alam made reference to the first poet-in-prison, Said Karmi, who was sentenced for life after World War I. Alam said that the spirit of the modern age was reflected in Karmi's poems, composed during the British mandate period. Alam pointed out that one of the main prisoner poets was Abd al-Karim Karmi, who eulogised Farhan Sa'adi, a prominent leader in the 1936 revolution. Samih al-Qassem and Mahmoud Darwish, two of the best-known Palestinian poets, were each imprisoned several times and wrote poems reflecting their experiences in jail. "Optimism, self-confidence, and faith in the people and their eventual victory" are the characteristics of prisoners' poetry, Alam said. "The only way the prisoner has to express the states of the self and to show commitment to the struggle is through art," said Alam. He then analysed selections of poetry written by various prisoners.

Alam's presentation was detailed and referred often to particular prison poets. Alam pointed out that some prisoners — like Khalil Touma and Mohammed Abd al-Salam — had reached maturity in their art.

The following poem by Mohammed Abd al-Salam, entitled "They Are Freedom Fighters," is an example of the poetry.

" WE CHANGE THE WORDS OF FAMOUS TUNES INTO REVOLUTIONARY SONGS. WE DISCOVER IN PRISON NEW POETS, SINGERS, AND COMPOSERS."

"They Are Freedom Fighters"

I remember one day a canary came to me
from the desert.
I was struggling against fetters and
walls.
It landed on my hand to rest from tiredness and fatigue.
It said: "I saw them coming,
Over their eyebrows something that
names cannot describe.
In their left arms there was a new
Quran,
Made by man."
It chattered on and on
And sparked one thousand questions in
my heart.
When it flew away, disappearing into the
horizon,
Something emanated from my
hand.
It resembled henna.

Short story writer Jamal Banoura presented the main ideas of some short stories written by Mohammed Elian, Hassan Sarandah, Sami Kilani, Mohammed Abu Nasr, and Mohammed Qaq. These prisoners wrote of interrogation, family visits, strikes, and their overall steadfastness. Banoura commented that the prisoners' style is simple, direct, and honest.

"Prisoners' stories," Banoura said, "are full of optimism and hope." This can be seen in story titles like: "The *Kasba* (Shrine) of Nafha," "The Returnee," and "Hours of the Pre-Dawn," in their choice of character names, and in the optimistic endings of several of the stories.

Ex-prisoner Adnan Sabbah made his presentation on the poetic experience in jail and spoke in detail on three main subjects that prisoners write about: women, homeland, and loyalty. He said, "Loyalty is a kind of self-protection used by prisoners to strengthen their commitment and keep their cause alive in their hearts. We change the words of famous tunes into revolutionary songs. We discover in prison new poets, singers, and composers."

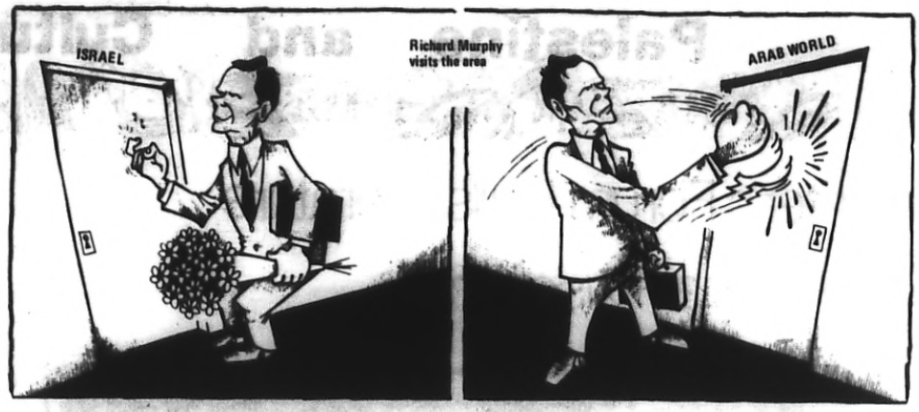
The poets and short story writers attending participated in a discussion of the ideas mentioned in the forum. Mohammed Batrawi, a literary columnist from *Al Tali'a* newspaper and *Al Kateb* magazine, spoke on the role of ideology in maintaining the steadfastness of prisoners and in making them creative writers. "Ideology is very important in promoting writers to reflect their belief in the eventual victory of the revolution," he said. Poet Said al-Ghazali commented that unfortunately the literary works produced in jail often suffer from superficiality and simplicity. They are often too direct, not subtle, and lack deep knowledge of the proper literary forms. Al-Ghazali asked what practical steps writers were taking to develop Palestinian literature in general and prisoners' literature in particular. He also suggested a means be found to liberate prisoners' literature from its seclusion behind the walls.

Batrawi proposed the formation of a special committee to oversee prisoners' literature. He also suggested collecting books and sending them to the prisons. Batrawi said the tasks of the committee should be to contact prisoners' families and gather the literary material written by prisoners. We should publish all material we receive," Batrawi insisted.

Poet Khalil Touma spoke on national unity as seen in prison and its reflection in their writings. "All martyrs of the revolution are respected and eulogised by all factions in prison," Touma said.

The conferees concluded that prisoners' literature has various humanitarian and revolutionary aspects. It is literature, they said, that enables them to resist the gradual death of those dreadful days in prison. ■

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS



This week, the local press focused on the continued slaughter of Palestinian refugees in refugee camps in Sidon, Lebanon, US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy's arrival in the region, and meetings held by various committees of the PLO.

Local papers ran wire service stories on the separatist Phalangist militia attacks against Lebanese and Palestinians in the Sidon area. Palestinian papers gave prominent coverage to reports about the conditions of Palestinian families fleeing the lethal bombardment of the Ain al-Hilweh and Mia Mia refugee camps.

Meetings of the PLO Executive Committee and the Fatah Central Committee, both held in Baghdad, received top coverage in the local papers.

US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy's visit was given mixed coverage. *Al Fajr* gave top billing to Murphy's meeting April 16 with a number of Palestinians and published the petition that was signed and presented to Murphy. *Al Sha'ab* also reprinted the petition in a two-column front-page report. *Al Quds* and *Al Mithaq* gave Murphy's meeting small front-page coverage.

Murphy's New Trip

The US State Department spokesperson has declared that Murphy will meet with Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip during his next visit to the area.

Murphy will try to find out if things have ripened for the implementation of American schemes to liquidate the Palestinian cause. He also wants to know if the Palestinian people have abandoned the PLO and if there is anyone who is willing to offer himself as an alternative to it. He also wants to find out if the position of the PLO has been shaken as a result of the conspiracies it encountered during the last years.

We believe that the US knows in advance what Murphy is trying to find out. We are sure that the US knows the true picture and realises that any attempt to bypass the PLO is doomed to failure. If some people have come out and shown readiness to play the role of an alternative, we are sure that the US knows well that these "some" lack credibility and influence.

The envoys will always find themselves back to square one, dealing with the fact that there is no alternative to the recognition of the PLO and Palestinian rights.

AL SHA'AB
April 11

The Political Move and Solution

In a recent interview with *Al Majallah* magazine, PLO leader Yasir Arafat emphasised the need to understand the difference between a political move and a political solution. This is the key to understanding the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement, which should be viewed as a political move to rally an Arab and international position seeking a political solution.

But some people construe the agreement as a final political solution. As a result of this mistaken notion, these people broke away from the PLO and are hostile to it.

The majority of the Palestinian people, the Arab peoples in general, and the friendly countries understand the agreement as a political move that should be pursued at all levels. On the basis of this move comes Arafat's visit to Amman and his meeting with King Hussein. This visit will naturally be followed by other visits to Amman or elsewhere so as to rally Arab forces to form a solid base for the desired solution.

AL FAJR
April 12

The Right Step

The PLO and Jordan decided to form a joint delegation to tour Arab and foreign capitals to explain the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement and to rally Arab and international support to push the political move forward. There is no doubt that freezing the political solution in the area, with the absence of an Arab military option, would result in freezing the cause and placing it in the same icebox of 1948. So it is vital to keep the cause alive by breaking the stalemate.

Every observer should realise the basics set forth by the Palestinian-Jordanian move. Foremost among them is the insistence that the final settlement be achieved through an international conference attended by all concerned.

Everyone afflicted with political blindness should realise that in order to reach the final settlement, one should go through a long process to prepare the atmosphere and remove the obstacles that stand in the way of this conference.

We won't miss the mark if we say that the Palestinian-Jordanian move is a right step on the right path. Such a step will not succeed unless it is backed by serious Arab support to force Washington to go back on its denial of the Palestinian rights and its refusal to talk with the legitimate Palestinian leadership.

Will this support materialise? We hope so — though we are not very optimistic.

AL FAJR
April 13

The Crisis of Arab Credibility

When Arab leaders reached their Fez initiative, they formed delegations to visit various world capitals, especially those of the permanent Security Council members. Some Arab delegations visited world capitals. But the inter-Arab differences made the task of these delegations almost impossible.

Yesterday there were reports that the Jordanian government and the PLO intend to form a joint delegation to explain the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement to the various world capitals. Such a step has many positive aspects. But there are some Arab issues that constitute the cornerstone of convincing the world of the great importance of the Jordanian-Palestinian accord.

To understand these issues we should realise that the Arab world is moving presently in three major political trends. First, the trend led by Jordan and the PLO with support from Egypt and Iraq. This move seeks a just peace through direct negotiations within an international peace conference.

Second, the trend led by Syria and some Palestinian factions. It is backed by Libya, Democratic Yemen, and sometimes Algeria. It rejects the political move on the basis of Amman agreement. But it does not put forward any alternatives.

Third, the conciliatory trend led by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

This situation leaves a negative impact on Arab credibility in the world countries which deal with the Arabs according to their own interests. The world will not take any Arab move seriously unless it is based on a steady Arab foundation. The Arab leaders should have opened the venues among themselves before embarking on such a step.

We should realise in time that Arab outbiddings will not constitute a way out of the crisis of Arab credibility. The conciliatory trends will deepen Arab differences. This will give rise to the need for studying the agreement objectively. The contents of the agreement are similar to the Fez resolutions. Rejecting it will not cancel it. But it will lead to the loss of Arab credibility.

AL QUDS
April 13

Murphy's Visit and the only Option

Murphy's visit to the area aroused clear and distinguished interest with all parties, each with a perspective different from the other. This interest was shown in Amman and Tel Aviv. It will undoubtedly show up in the Arab capitals which he will visit.

Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli defence minister, for instance, "advised" the US administration not to get involved in the present peace process and not to "risk the US reputation."

Yitzhak Shamir considers the meeting between Arafat and the US Congressional delegation as "detrimental to the cause of peace." This means that Israel insists on rejecting the minimum of any Palestinian-American dialogue. It has asserted to the American envoy, even before meeting him, that it rejects any outcome his present tour may produce.

While Israel is clear and decided in its rejection, the real problem lies with the disunited Arab stand which lacks solidarity as well as decisiveness regarding the political programme put forth by the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement.

The more the Arab stand is united, the more able we will be to "convince" the US of the right framework for the achievement of a just solution.

We are "flexible and open," said Arafat, regarding the political solution to the Palestinian problem on the basis of dealing with the PLO in its capacity as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Will the American position remain unchanged and linked to the Israeli rejection? Or will the Arab stand move to assert itself in the face of obstacles and hardships?

We hope there will be a unified Arab stand. It is our only option.

AL FAJR
April 16

Protest to Hospice Closure Mounts

In spite of the Israeli government's declared intention to close down the only government-run Arab hospital in East Jerusalem — the Hospice — pressure from Palestinian residents in Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied West Bank continues to mount in hopes of preventing the closure altogether.

During a Day of Solidarity with the Hospice Hospital April 15 organised by the Hospice Friends Committee, thousands of Arab residents of Jerusalem and representatives of local charitable societies signed a petition demanding Israel keep the Arab hospital open. The petitioners say the hospital is needed to serve the poor Arab population who cannot afford the high cost of treatment in Israeli hospitals or health insurance.

Israeli Minister of Health Mordechai Gur has been wavering in public statements about the hospital. On April 9 Gur said that the hospital will be closed. Later on April 15 he said that a final decision on the closure has not yet been taken.

The petition charges that the decision to close the hospital is purely political. The petition, which will be presented to Israeli officials, states: "This measure (to close the hospital) is a continuation of previous measures intended to hit at Arab health institutes in Jerusalem, which included the closure of the health centre in Wadi al-Joz, general laboratories and the centre for preventing chest illnesses, as well as the curtailment of the function of the blood bank."

Mustafa Abu Zahra, a wholesale merchant in Jerusalem who came to the hospital to sign the petition, said that he believes the measure is "part of a policy to amalgamate Arab institutions in Jerusalem into the Israeli infrastructure."

Physicians and employees of the Hospice reason that if the Israeli measure is not politically motivated, then the hospital administration's proposals to reorganise the Hospice, keep it running, and improve services should have been given serious consideration. These options include turning the hospital into a charitable organisation funded by private donors, since Israel claims it does not have the money to keep the hospital functioning. The Israeli government share of the hospital's US$1 million budget is only 60 percent. In a press conference held by the Hospice Friends Committee last week, Isma'il Taziz, member of the committee and head of the West Bank Pharmaceutical Union, said the Israelis will spend three times this sum to find alternative medical outlets for Hospice patients.

Taziz told *Al Fajr* that the campaign of the *ad hoc* committee has gone beyond the occupied territories to former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and even to the Pope. The Austrian Church owns the property on which the hospital is built. In the past, the church expressed their desire to regain use of the property and the Israeli government has apparently seized the opportunity to shut it down. Taziz said he expects international support for the hospital to grow. He is optimistic that the hospital will continue to function despite Israeli measures.

High Court Halts Settlement Construction at Beit Amin

Residents of the village of Beit Amin in the Qalqilya district recently won an order *nisi* from the Israeli High Court and the military government land registration committees in Beit El, near Ramallah, and Tulkarm. According to the order, Israeli construction companies building a settlement on disputed property in Beit Amin must stop construction immediately until the question of land ownership is resolved in court.

Israeli companies have been working on the land since 1981. The new 30-family settlement was to be named Sha'ar Hatikva.

Construction was halted on 15 residences due to the order but continued on four others, which are near completion, on the condition that they will become the property of the party the court eventually decides is owner of the land.

The disputed land includes 82 dunums owned by six families from Beit Amin. The families obtained an order *nisi* in 1983 from the Nablus magistrates court following a two-year legal battle. None of the Israeli companies, however, abided by the court order, so the landowners and their attorney, Felicia Langer, took the case to the High Court.

Ownership of the property will be resolved in future hearings.

Calendar

April 19

Theatre: From the Source to Sorrow, at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem, 3:00 pm. Tickets IS2000. Tel: 288189/280957.

Book Fair: at Bethlehem University, Cinema Hall, 2:00-5:00 pm.

April 20

Theatre: *From the Source to Sorrow*, at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem, 7:00 pm. Tickets IS2000. Tel: 288189/280957.

Book Fair: at Bethlehem University, Cinema Hall, 10:00 am — 5:00 pm.

Conference: for Prisoners' Week. Sponsored by the Women's Work Committee. At the Federation of Unions Building, Beit Hanina, 2:00 pm. Clothes will be distributed to families for 100 men and women prisoners who have served five years or more in Israeli jails.

April 21

Theatre: *From the Source to Sorrow*, at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem, 5:00 pm. Tickets IS2000. Tel: 288189/280957.

Book Fair: at Bethlehem University, Cinema Hall, 10:00 am — 5:00 pm.

April 25

Music: *Bach Organ Festival Recital*, by Elizabeth Roloff. One of a series of twelve weekly concerts on Thursday evenings to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach. At the Church of the Redeemer, Muristan Road (Old City), Jerusalem, 8:30 pm. Tickets available at door. Tel: 282543/286654.

April 26

Lecture: *Christian Meaning in Eastern Turkey*, by Dr Manuel Hassassian, in English. Part of the Christianity in the Holy Land series. At Tantur Ecumenical Institute on the Jerusalem-Bethlehem Road. Admission free. 4:30-6:00 pm.

Theatre: *The Dictator*, performed by al-Rahala Theatre Troupe at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem, 7:00 pm. Tickets IS1500. Tel: 288189/280957.

Karameh

continued from page 2

(UNRWA) April 15 said that two Palestinian refugees "have been shot dead, one has been wounded, and six Palestinian boys are missing in incidents in West Beirut in the past three days." The release said the six boys were last seen cycling near Beirut Airport, not far from Burj al-Barajneh. UNRWA also said two refugees were kidnapped April 15 but later released "after being severely beaten for unknown reasons." The agency statement said the bodies of six Palestinians were found in Sidon April 13 beheaded and with their hands tied behind their backs. The number of casualties among Palestinian refugees in the Sidon area as of April 16 was 37 dead, 111 injured and hospitalised, and 87 lightly wounded. The UNRWA school at Mia Mia was hit by a shell April 15 which destroyed the roof. Seventeen families were living in the school basement.

Crippled for Life

Continued from page 10

were drafted into the standing army over the past few years. Lebanon has become their Vietnam, a trauma that will be with them for a lifetime. And the Israeli army will never be the same again. Although the soldiers may outwardly appear and cheerful — like other young people anywhere else in the world — they are empty inside. Some of them have given up all hope and have taken to fantasising about some distant country, far removed from Israel.

Both the previous government and the present government have established a new set of norms for the Israeli army, for the younger generation, and for the public at large. Perhaps one day, Lebanon will once again regain some stability, but the psychological destruction it left in its wake will never be erased.

The military ethic on which we were brought up has been scrubbed to a frazzle and hung up to dry: its colours are faded and it's shot through with holes. Up close it looks like a rag for cleaning a gun. It flutters in the breeze at Nabatiyeh, Junieh, and for that matter, everywhere. After the wind, rain, and snow do their work, all that will be left is a rag.

So drink up boys. Get stone-drunk and try to blot out the world. On Sunday you'll be up in Lebanon once again. (Translation: Al Hamishmar, March 8, 1985).

"Holy Fire"

continued from page 1

said the Assyrian scout troop stopped practising on Fridays and Saturdays out of respect for the Jewish *sabbath* but this was apparently not enough to satisfy them. The Jewish neighbourhood in the vicinity of the Assyrian convent is all Assyrian property confiscated after 1967 to build the Jewish quarter.

Archbishop Jijawi said he has received a verbal apology from Israeli officials for the incident, the fifth in recent history. Yet no action has been taken against those responsible. Assyrian youths said some of the fanatic Jews living nearby threatened that if the youths bother Jewish residents of the neighbourhood, the Jews will kill the Assyrian archbishop and destroy the church.

Arab Americans

continued from page 5.

very untrue." On the contrary, Murphy was "moved by what Mike Mansour said about his experience." Mansour, of Palestinian descent and resident of New Mexico, said "I don't know if I want to use the word oblivious" to describe Murphy's reaction. Mansour explained that Murphy was shocked to hear what he had gone through when he was arrested by Israel on a visit to his family in the West Bank in April 1984. Mansour, who was a member of the group at the AAI conference, said that though Murphy had been unable to recall his case earlier in the conversation, "he was very sympathetic and invited me to go and meet with him." Mike Mansour was arrested by the Israelis for 23 days in 1984 while on a family visit in the West Bank and was, according to his account, tortured by the Israeli interrogation officers.

Asked to comment on Salem's version of the meeting, Khader stood firmly by his own. The details of the meeting, he said, were still very fresh in his mind, adding that remarks he heard may not have been heard by others.

An American Arab intellectual in town who learned of the event and the controversy surrounding what exactly happened smiled and remarked, "Well, what else is new?" The way the American government has dealt with the Arabs since the 1940s "makes Khader's account a believable one," he concluded. Salem, on the other hand, argues that there must be a way for Arab Americans to begin playing a role in American politics — and this event was it.

LEARN ARABIC WITH ARABS IN JERUSALEM

The Arab Council for Public Affairs Announces

An Intensive, Two-Month Arabic Course for foreign students

July 1 — August 30

The course will include: day-long teaching workshops, boarding arrangements in furnished apartments and rooms, visits to Arab homes, tours of the country, and more.

For Further Information, write:

Arab Council for Public Affairs
Cultural Department
P.O. Box 19839, Jerusalem

WEEKLY REVIEW

Greek Orthodox Christians celebrated the occasion of Holy Fire Saturday, April 13 at the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem. According to Greek Orthodox tradition, the fire "erupts" miraculously from the Church the night before Easter and is then passed throughout the West Bank and flown to other countries./AO photo

April 9, 1985

KNESSET MEMBERS VISIT AL-FARA'A

NABLUS — Three Israeli Knesset members from the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) visited al-Fara'a prison in the occupied territories and met with a large number of detainees.

The detainees, most of whom are students and boys from refugee camps, briefed the MKs on the hard conditions in the prison, including physical and psychological torture, beatings, humiliation, and extraction of confessions by force. The detainees also complained of severe overcrowding, poor quality of food, and a total ban on newsapers, magazines and books.

GRENADE ATTACK ON SA'IR PATROL

SA'IR — A hand grenade was thrown at an Israeli army patrol in the village of Sa'ir in the Hebron district. One Israeli soldier was wounded in the attack, according to Israeli reports, which occurred in the southern part of the village.

Israeli troops immediately imposed a curfew on the area and launched a wide-scale search for the attackers. A number of houses in the village have been raided by the troops.

April 10, 1985

ARMY VEHICLE PETROL BOMBED IN ASKAR

ASKAR — A petrol bomb was tossed at an Israeli army vehicle in Askar camp outside Nablus on April 9. Israeli troops rushed to the scene, rounded up several Arab residents and searched a number of houses in the camp.

MEMORIAL FOR SARTAWI

SARTA — A memorial ceremony for the late Issam Sartawi, member of the Palestine National Council who was assassinated in 1983, was held in the village of Sarta yesterday. The ceremony was attended by members of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Council, headed by MK Matityahu Peled, and an audience of 150 persons.

VILLAGERS BANNED FROM TRAVEL

BETHLEHEM — The Israeli authorities are continuing to ban residents of al-Ubeidiyeh village in the Bethlehem district from travelling to Jordan. The ban has been in effect for the last two months.

PALESTINIAN WOMAN REMANDED

RAMALLAH — The Ramallah military court ordered 19-year-old Ghada Abd al-Fattah al-Farajeh of Dheisheh refugee camp remanded into police custody for another 10 days. She is charged with stone-throwing and "inciting" on Land Day.

GAZA YOUTH JAILED FOR MEMBERSHIP

GAZA — The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Yousef al-Makusi of Gaza to one year in prison and three years suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation.

April 11, 1985

FREITEKH BURIED

NABLUS — Amid tight security measures and restrictions, ex-prisoner Mahmoud Arabi Freitekh, who died of cancer in Amman earlier this week, was buried in Nablus. The funeral which took place at 11:00 pm, was attended only by 10 members of Freitekh's family in keeping with military orders.

PHARMACISTS PROTEST CLOSURE OF AL-BIREH SHOPS

AL-BIREH — The Pharmacists' Union in the West Bank cabled the Israeli defence minister protesting the closure of 23 shops in al-Bireh for two months following the killing of a Jewish settler in al-Bireh's marketplace. "The closure contravenes international laws and should be cancelled," the cable said.

BEIT JALA MERCHANTS PROTEST HEAVY TAXES

BEIT JALA — Merchants in Beit Jala, west of Bethlehem, staged a sit-in strike outside the municipality to protest heavy taxes imposed on them and the methods by which the taxes are levied.

OLIVE TREES UPROOTED

AL-MALL — On April 4 an Israeli army unit raided the land owned by Ahmad Mohammed Ghanayem in al-Mall area. The army camped on the land and in the process destroyed 15 olive trees. When Sakhnin residents protested and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the force, they were told by the officer in charge that the force was ordered to be there and would not leave except on order.

The Sakhnin village council is to discuss the incident during its next meeting.

YOUTH RELEASED

BETHLEHEM — The Israeli authorities released Adnan Fathi Shahin from Artas village in the Bethlehem district after he served a 10-month jail sentence for membership in an illegal organisation. The authorities also released Bassem Mohammed Ahmad Shalash from Shuqba village near Ramallah after he served a 10-month jail sentence on security charges.

BANI NA'IM YOUTH SENTENCED

NABLUS - The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Fu'ad Amer Manasrah from Bani Na'im to 80 days in prison and 180 days suspended. He was also fined IS500,000. He is charged with contacting a hostile organization while studying abroad in 1977.

WAQF DEPARTMENT ROBBED

JENIN — Thieves broke into the *waqf* department building in Jenin. They stole the safe which contained JD2200. The thieves also broke into the Home of Teaching the Quran and stole JD150. Police are investigating.

JENIN YOUTH SENTENCED

NABLUS — The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Ihsan Abd al-Latif al-M'ani to three months in jail and six months suspended. He was also fined IS150,000. He is accused of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles.

DFLP MEMBER DETAINED IN AMMAN

Jordanian authorities arrested Saji Salameh, member of the DFLP Central Committee. Salameh had been arrested several times in the past by the Jordanians, but was released after PLO leader Yasir Arafat intervened personally on his behalf.

April 12, 1985

BETHLEHEM MERCHANT FINED IS9 MILLION

BETHLEHEM — Israeli tax authorities imposed a IS9 million fine on a merchant from the village of Husan in the Bethlehem district on the pretext that he evaded tax payment over the past five years.

April 14, 1985

SA'IR CURFEW LIFTED

Israeli army troops lifted a curfew imposed April 11 on the village of Sa'ir in the Hebron district following a bomb attack on a military patrol. One soldier was reportedly lightly injured in the attack.

ISRAELI BUS STONED

An Israeli Egged bus passing the Jalazon refugee camp

(Second from left to right) Tawfiq Zayyad; Uzi Burstein, spokesperson for the DFPE; and Meir Wilner at a press conference at Beit Agron in Jerusalem April 17. The three called the conference to protest harsh conditions in Fara'a detention centre.

north of Ramallah was pelted with stones, Israel Radio reported. The radio said the bus windscreen was smashed but no one was hurt.

HOSPICE SOLIDARITY DAY

A delegation representing nationalist unions and institutions in Jerusalem will visit the Hospice Hospital in the Old City of Jerusalem today in what has been declared as a "day for solidarity with the Hospice." The Israelis have decided to close down the hospital.

RAMALLAH JUDGE RELEASED

Judge Sa'id Abu Swai of the Ramallah Appeals Court was freed from detention after it was proven that he is innocent of bribery charges against him.

GAZA YOUTH GETS 1 YEAR

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Abdullah Mahmoud Tafesh of Gaza to one year in prison and one year suspended on charges of possessing weapons.

JORDAN CANCELS TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

The Jordanian government has cancelled all restrictions imposed on West Bank teenagers who travel to Jordan and other Arab countries via the King Hussein and Prince Mohammed bridges.

JALAZON YOUTH FINED

The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced student Ayman Mahmoud al-Ramahi of Jalazon refugee camp to three months in prison, two years suspended, and a IS50,000 fine on charges of possessing banned material.

AL-BIREH YOUTH RELEASED

Israeli authorities released Hussein Mahmoud Barakat of al-Bireh after he served a two-month jail sentence on charges of assaulting the commander of the Israeli border police.

April 15, 1985

BURQIN HOUSE BULLDOZED

Israeli bulldozers demolished the home of Yasin Mahmoud Yasin in Burqin village in the Jenin district. The four-room house was demolished on the pretext that it had been illegally constructed.

KALANDIA BROTHERS JAILED

The Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Husni Mohammed Abd al-Rahman Bazi', 21, to eight months in prison and 24 months suspended on charges of possessing a pistol. His brother Sharif was sentenced by the same court to three months in prison and a IS200,000 fine on charges of demonstrating and throwing stones at Israeli vehicles. The two brothers are residents of Kalandia refugee camp.

2 GAZANS JAILED

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Ibrahim Hamudeh, 18, to two years in prison and three years suspended and Hani Dmeireh, 19, to 21 months in prison and three years suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation, distributing leaflets, and planting a bomb. Both are residents of Jabalya al-Balad in the Gaza Strip.

Children sang at a festival for Prisoners' Day (April 17) held by the Women's Committee for Social Action at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem April 16./AO photo

HALHOUL STUDENT JAILED

The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced student Salah Yusif al-Baba of Halhoul in the Hebron district to six months in prison and one-and-a-half years suspended on charges of stone-throwing.

April 16, 1985

8 AL-BIREH SHOPS REOPENED

The Israeli authorities have permitted the re-opening of eight out of 23 shops closed down following the killing of a Jewish settler in al-Bireh earlier this month. The owners of the eight shops had filed a complaint with the authorities against the closure.

BOMB DISMANTLED IN BEER SHEBA

Israel police found and safely defused a bomb placed at the entrance to the Beer Sheba railway station. Israel Radio said 10 Arabs were taken into custody for interrogation.

RELEASED AFTER 10 YEARS

Mahmoud Hussam Barghouthi, of Beit Rima village in the Ramallah district was released after he served a 10-year jail sentence at Jnaid prison on security charges. Barghouthi was a student at the Arab University of Beirut when he was detained.

GAZANS CONVICTED FOR HIJACK PLAN

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Mahmoud Yousef Mahal and Ahmad Abd al-Rahman Abu Lamthi to 15 months in prison and 21 months suspended on charges of planning to hijack an Israeli bus. Both youths are residents of Gaza.

ISRAEL: DEPARTING YOUTHS MUST REMAIN ABROAD FOR 9 MONTHS

The Israeli authorities banned West Bank teenagers from leaving to Jordan on a one-month permit. The authorities insist that these teenagers who wish to seek work in Jordan and other Arab countries remain abroad for nine months instead of one.

2 GOLAN DRUZE DETAINED

Israeli police announced that two Druze leaders from the Golan Heights had been detained for unspecified reasons. The two are Adel Abu Jabal, 50, and Assa'd Wadi, 45. Both are from the village of Majdal Shams.

Super-exploitation

Continued from page 8&9

This workshop manufactures only T-shirts in summer and sweatshirts in winter. The only male employee, a cousin of the owner, markets about 10,000 shirts a month to Jerusalem shops — half in the Old City and half in West Jerusalem, where immediate cash payment helps any money flow problem.

Mohammed's own family's shop in the Old City sold tourists' pre-stamped T-shirts six or seven years ago for US$3, bought from the Israeli "Stampa" company. When Mohammed bought decals and a stamping machine and did this work himself, he found he could sell the shirts for US$2.5. Then he went to a Bethlehem shirt manufacturer and bought shirts for US$.50 less. He now buys huge bolts of top quality cotton from an Arab wholesaler in nearby Azzariya and makes his own designs. "I Love Palestine" is his favourite.

In addition to these cottage and small-scale factories, there are a dozen heavy machine textile factories in the West Bank — in Hebron, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Nablus particularly. Here, capital investment is obvious from the modern machinery, and workers are paid better, but not always. Women workers at a major Nablus factory which produces jeans went on strike several years ago against wage discrimination: male workers were being paid JD100 compared to JD40 for women. And some factories pay low wages and entice skilled workers by offering profit-sharing, but actually end the year in red ink.

A National Company

The Rizk family in Beit Jala has owned and operated the National Textile Company, which produces children's, men's, and women's underwear, for 28 years. It currently employs 36 local residents — 28 are women — in its three-storey factory. The company buys cotton and polyester thread and wool yarn as well as special chemical dyes from Tel Aviv but all other production ingredients are locally made. Even the plastic bag packaging comes from nearby Beit Sahour. The NTC, which usually has a prominent display at cultural festivals as an example of a national industry, only markets to the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

The factory was closed for several months last year due to a dispute among the owners but the same workers have gradually been rehired. New workers in non-skilled jobs earn JD40, sewers make JD70, and a worker who has been with the company for 17 years earns JD200.

Skill-Less Work

In the Women's Work Committee study in 1980, 66 percent of the factory workers interviewed said they had received some prior training in sewing. Siham, a sewing instructor at a Jerusalem preparatory school, reports she has graduated about 15 girls every year in sewing. Only one, she says, is working in a factory. Last year 15 of her 20 students dropped sewing to prepare for imminent marriage and five work at home sewing for neighbours. This year, however, seven of the girls in a class of 11 seem "interested" in pursuing seamstressing as a career. But what are their prospects?

The school where Siham teaches holds a fashion exhibit every year to help students find jobs. But the deservedly bad reputation of some sewing factories has spurred families to prevent their daughters from working. Besides the here-today, gone-tomorrow workshops, extremely low wages, false promises of profit-sharing, "importing" girls from Gaza for sweatshop conditions, and firing of anyone who openly objects to factory management, Siham also reports that a new factory in Muqaber in Jerusalem which asked the school for seamstresses tried to force the girls to work in a bar run by the factory owner after their "sewing hours" were over.

The few young women who land stable, standard-wage jobs will find that their machine work has little to do with skillful sewing or tailoring techniques they learned in school. Piecework for Israeli manufacturers or assembly work for Palestinian factories do not teach useful sewing skills. In fact, in subcontracting it is possible for a worker never to see a finished product. A sewing instructor who commutes to a Ramallah area village says she believes that women are losing useful skills, once passed from mother to daughter, in favour of low-paying cash labour which is, in end, less productive for the society.

But for women without education, sweatshop labour is the only job alternative. And every women's organization, whether progressive or traditional, unwittingly feeds the system by teaching women sewing and knitting machine work for a glutted labour market under occupation and economic exploitation.

Prisons Fertile Ground for Disease

Out of the hundreds of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails, nearly 70 percent suffer from some form of illness, either caused or aggravated by their poor treatment while in prison. *Al Fajr's* **Maher Abukhater** looks at this situation from the perspective of recently released prisoners.

Ahmad Babars, 36, was arrested in 1968 on "security charges," convicted and sentenced to 18 years in an Israeli prison. In the early 1970s he developed several physical ailments including hemorrhoids, ulcers, poor vision, and recurrent headaches. Babars informed prison authorities of his poor health condition but his complaints were not taken seriously. He was only treated for the ulcer and hemorrhoid condition with medication.

Babars' headaches worsened and by the end of 1980, he had lost the sight in his right eye and was gradually losing vision in the left. He again demanded medical assistance from a specialist but was only allowed to see an eye doctor who then confirmed his loss of sight but gave no reason for it.

Finally, by the end of 1983, Babars was given permission to see another eye specialist whom he told of his headaches and worsening sight. The physician, alarmed at Babars' symptoms, ordered he be given a complete physical at a hospital outside prison. The physical revealed that Babars had a brain tumour, the cause of his headaches and loss of sight in the right eye. It was then recommended that he undergo immediate surgery to extract the tumour before it spread. On April 2, 1984, Babars was finally operated on and as much of the tumour as possible was removed. But the tumour had apparently already spread and extensive damage been done, so that in May of the same year he was considered a serious case. Prison officials therefore recommended he be released to continue treatment outside the country because Israeli hospitals could no longer help him. The release order was made on May 6, 1984, but because of his status as a political prisoner he was not immediately released.

In January of this year, Babars was released following pressure on the prison administration from his lawyer. Two months later he was admitted to Maqassed Hospital for a hemorrhoidectomy. Maqassed, a private Arab hospital in East Jerusalem, was unable to help with his tumour, which physicians believe may reappear very soon. The only way Babars can prevent its recurrence is through chemotherapy, which he intends to obtain outside the country.

"Between 70-80 percent of the Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons have one kind of illness or another," said Samir Abu Diab, himself a former political prisoner who was released in February after spending 16 years in Israeli prisons. The most common conditions are chronic back pain, ulcer, rheumatism, and hemorrhoids, along with a number of cases of heart and lung diseases and cancer.

Bassam Sayeh, who spent eight years in Israeli prisons from February 26, 1975 to February 24, 1983, added: "It is a policy of the Israeli government that a political prisoner develop an illness." Sayeh, the son of newly-appointed speaker of the Palestine National Council Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Sayeh, explained: "When a political prisoner becomes ill, his concerns will be mainly his health. He becomes vulnerable and ready to do anything to get better. Israeli prison officials then offer this person good hospital treatment if he spies on his fellow political inmates in return."

Sayeh said that this method was used during the famous Nafha prison strike in 1980 when two political prisoners died during force-feeding and others were admitted to hospital for treatment. The supervising prison physician, Dr Cohen, approached the ill, he said, and promised them speedy recovery and good treatment in return for ending their strike. Cohen's attempts, however, failed.

Prisoners interviewed confirmed that when a prisoner shows signs of illness, treatment usually is delayed as much as possible until the disease advances so that prisoners are physically impaired, possibly for life. When the symptoms increase, they said, the sick person is taken to the prison clinic, which is run by a guard who poses as a nurse. The nurse-guard usually gives the sick prisoner an aspirin, regardless of the symptom. This pill, the prisoners agreed, can actually deteriorate a prisoner's health, especially if he suffers from ulcers. The seriously ill are seen by a general practitioner who visits the prison once every week or two and only if they have had their name on the sick list.

But even then, explained Khalil Abu Zayyad, a former political prisoner for 10 years, the physician gives a surface check-up and prescribes either sedatives or aspirin. Sayeh said the prisoners agree among themselves not to take any medicine, if possible, for fear they have been given the wrong medication or that they might allow themselves to be controlled by the Israelis by becoming addicted to pain-killing drugs.

One way the prisoners try to reduce the chances of illness is by exercising regularly. Hani Issawi exercised every day of the 10 years he spent in prison from November 19, 1970 through November 18, 1980. He is one of the few former political prisoners without any serious illness. He suffers only vision trouble, mainly from being in a closed room for 23 hours a day. Issawi said he exercised every time he could to make up for the lack of sun necessary for the body.

THE MOST SERIOUS CASES, LIKE THOSE WITH HEART OR LUNG DISEASES OR THE FEW THAT COME OUT WITH CANCER, END UP HAVING THE COSTLY EXPENSE OF TRAVELLING ABROAD FOR SURGERY.

Absence of sun, overcrowding, and malnutrition are the main causes for illness, explained Abu Zayyad, who served the same term as Issawi. This was confirmed by Dr Taysir Talhami, a physician at a Jerusalem clinic who treats prisoners after their release.

Talhami explained that an unbalanced diet causes hemorrhoids and constipation, as well as ulcers. Khamis Salaimeh spent 15 years in jail from 1968 to 1983; during his last 10 years in prison he suffered from ulcers which he attributed to the bad food and harsh conditions. Talhami said these were the most common diseases of former prisoners he treated. The diet the prisoners received differed depending on whether the prison was in the West Bank or in Israel. The West Bank prison meals include one egg, a plate of *foul* (brown beans), olives, jam, butter, and tea for breakfast. Lunch includes two days of fish, two days of meat mixed with bread, one day of eggs, and one day of chicken. For dinner the prisoners are given rice and potatoes. Prisoners inside Israel get cheese, eggs, *labaneh*, milk, jam, butter, and coffee or tea. Lunch is similar to West Bank prisons and at dinner, in addition to potatoes and rice, the prisoners are given green beans and *pasta*. Pepper and tomatoes — both contributing to hemorrhoids — are usually present at mealtime. In addition to the food often aggravating or causing a disorder, the amount of food served is a source of malnutrition. Prisoners say portions of food given are relatively small.

A rare picture of Fara'a detainees, sleeping on floor mats, taken in 1984.

Another common complaint is painful joints, caused from the deprivation of sun for long periods, from dampness of cells, and the lack of movement. Exercising is the only remedy for this disease. Rheumatism as well as back trouble are also attributed to sleeping on the floor. Only in 1976 were prisoners given a five-centimetre thick plastic mattress. Before that they were only given five blankets — to use as mattress, cover, and pillow. After 1980, elevated beds were introduced to a few prisons — those cohabited by Arab and Jewish prisoners — following the Nafha hunger strike.

Overcrowding also leads to health problems. "Rooms that are big enough for seven people have 20 in them," said Abu Zayyad. "When we slept on the floor, we had room enough only for the mattresses." The prisoners were not able to move or do anything. If someone wanted to exercise he would do it in the space where he sleeps. Because of the severe overcrowding, air in the room becomes stagnant, especially since there is no ventilation. This causes lung disorders like the kind Abu Diab suffers from. Abu Diab said he occasionally finds difficulty in breathing which he said is due to the situation of overcrowding and gassing. He said on several occasions jailers fired tear gas into the prison cells, particularly when prisoners were holding a nationalist celebration. The gas the jailers use is so strong, Abu Diab said, that its smell remains in the rooms for several days and the jailers have to use ventilating machines to get rid of it.

The prisoners interviwed by *Al Fajr* agreed that most of these diseases and conditions could have been averted had they had early and proper treatment. They complained that only when the illness becomes obviously serious and when they complain a great deal are they given real treatment or taken to a hospital outside the prison. Abu Zayyad, who developed a herniated disk in his back, said he needed physical therapy but was not given any in prison. When he was released he sought regular physical therapy sessions in Jerusalem but a year later was placed under town arrest in his hometown of Azzariya because of his activities on behalf of prisoners. The town arrest order prevented him from getting to the hospital for therapy or even physical checkups. He makes do with exercises at home.

There are currently more than 3000 political prisoners in 13 Israeli prisons. Of these 1000 are long-term prisoners, sentenced to 25 years or life. The prisoners say they usually expect to suffer some kind of illness while in prison. When they come out they go directly to a clinic for a complete physical just as a matter of course. Many of the prisoners, according to Dr Talhami, need some kind of treatment and regular checkups. The most serious cases, like those with heart or lung diseases or the few that come out with cancer, end up having the costly expense of travelling abroad for surgery. While some local Palestinian institutions help defray a portion of the medical expenses, the prisoners can be forced to bear most of the cost, especially if treatment is needed over a long period of time. ■